Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-TWO • NUMBER ONE • JULY 1991

How We Helped Saddam Survive
Laurie Mylroie

Bad Advice for the Democrats
Irwin M. Stelzer

Who Won Nicaragua?
Elliott Abrams

CNN vs. Israel
Andrea Levin

PC & the Ellis Affair
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George Eliot's Rabbi
Edward Alexander

The Threshold of This World—A Story
Kelly Cherry

Books in Review: Norman Podhoretz/David Pryce-Jones/
Scott McConnell/Mark Falcoff/Mary Eberstadt

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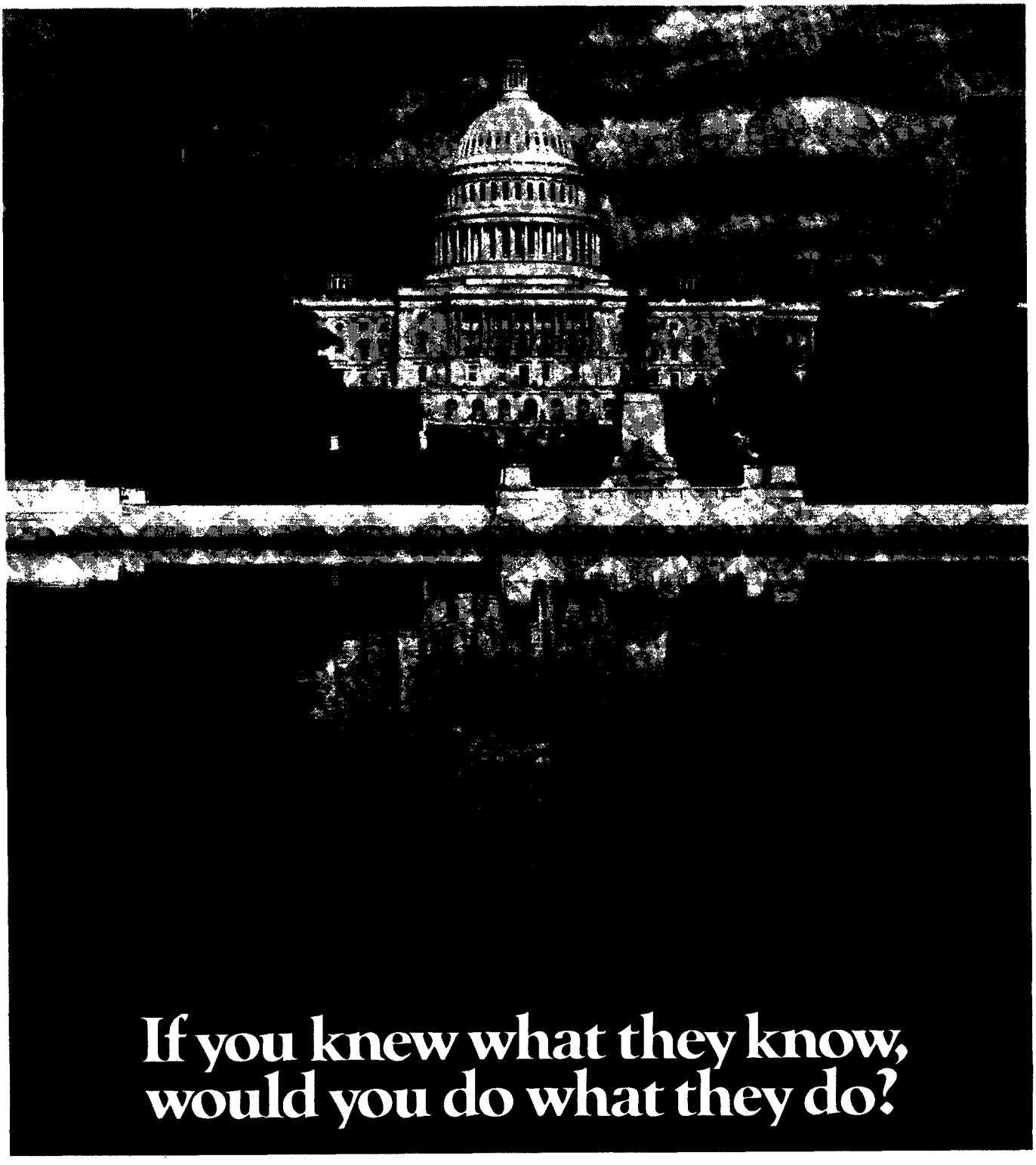

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COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $3.75, $39 a year; 2 years $72, 3 years $105—Add $8.00 per year for all foreign subscriptions, including Canada and Latin America—Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

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Letters from Readers

Quotation & Misquotation

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Right to Misquote" [April], Gertrude Himmelfarb struggles with an intellectual problem that other commentators on Jeffrey Masson's lawsuit against the *New Yorker*, Alfred Knopf, and me have had to struggle with. This is the fact that our defense against Masson's charge that he was misquoted in my book, *In the Freud Archives*, is hopelessly illogical. We argue two things in our briefs, each of which makes perfectly good sense by itself but in combination make no sense at all. We say (1) that Masson's accusation is unfounded, and that the quotations he challenges are statements he apparently forgot he made, since they appear almost word for word in my notes; and (2) that the law gives writers discretion in how they treat quotations—that the important thing is to convey the substance of a subject's thought. What is going on here? If we argue that Masson's words were not altered, why do we also argue that it doesn't matter whether his words *were* altered? Doesn't the second statement cast doubt on the truth of the first?

The answer to the question lies in an arcane and little understood procedure of the law called summary judgment, which Miss Himmelfarb is evidently not conversant with, and which I myself am only dimly beginning to grasp after six years of study under accredited masters. Like the Japanese tea ceremony, summary judgment can be exquisitely interesting to its students but excruciatingly boring to everyone else. Nevertheless, I propose to beg the reader's indulgence and try to explain it, since its peculiar nature lies at the heart of the problem that plagues Miss Himmelfarb and sometimes leads her into errors of thinking that I think she would ordinarily not make.

Summary judgment (I quote here from a footnote in the afterword to my book, *The Journalist and the Murderer*, which evidently escaped Miss Himmelfarb's notice)

> is an expedient the law provides for defendants who wish to avoid the expense of a trial. In summary judgment, the defendant must demonstrate that the plaintiff could not possibly win his case at trial. To make this demonstration fit within the confines of Rule 56(C) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure—which stipulates that summary judgment may be granted only when "there is no genuine issue as to any material fact"—the defendant is often obliged to leave unchallenged dire accusations which, at trial, the plaintiff would have to back up with evidence.

In the summary-judgment proceedings of the Masson lawsuit, our side could not, by the rules, challenge Masson's dire accusation that I had invented the quotations that appear in my notes. (Nor did he have to support his accusation in any way—in summary judgment, the burden of proof shifts to the defendant's side.) We knew that to comply with Rule 56(C) the court could not consider the notes, because Masson—calling them counterfeit—had made them an "issue as to material fact." We therefore took another tack: we offered the court quotations from 40 hours of taped interviews made over many months (which Masson was obliged to accept as genuine), in which Masson returns, over and over, to the same subjects as those in the disputed quotations and says similar things about them. For example, to parallel the much quoted passage in my book—where Masson, wistfully ruminating on the changes he would have made in Anna Freud's gloomy house after her death had he been made director of the Freud musuem there, says that "Maresfield Gardens would have been a center of scholarship, but it also would have been a place of sex, women, fun. It would have been like the change in *The Wizard of Oz*, from black and white into color"—we offered such taped comments as "We were going to pass women on to each other, and we were going to have a great time together when I lived in the Freud house," and "They're going to be calling the police on me every time I give a party or something," and "It would take an Act of Congress to get me out of Anna Freud's house." We did this as a legal stratagem within the rules of the artificial exercise of summary judgment, and the district-court judge who ruled in our favor, as well as the majority of the appeals court

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who upheld his decision, understood it as such.

These judges were aware that we had made no concession, but under the rules of the game they had to behave *as if* we had. The lay press, not familiar with summary judgment and not understanding the "as if" character of the proceeding, interpreted the decision of the appeals court to mean that the court had found that Masson's charges were true—that I had invented quotations—but still ruled for our side because the quotations were either not damaging or were close enough to other statements Masson had made to be legally permissible. The court, in fact, had found nothing of the sort. It was not its business to decide whether Masson's accusation was true. Its mandate was to rule on whether there was enough weight on Masson's side of the case to merit the cost to the taxpayer of a jury trial. A dissenting appeals-court judge, Alex Kozinski, believed he had found flaws in the majority's legal rationale for denying Masson his day in court. The Supreme Court is now deliberating on the case and on its meaning for the conflicting interests of journalists and litigious subjects—the one protected by the First Amendment and the other by the Sixth.

I would like to put on record that the last time I invented quotations was in 1954, in a creative-writing class at the University of Michigan taught by the late Alan Seager, who gave me a mortifying C in the course and effectively kept me from pursuing what might have been a nice, quiet career in short-story writing. Since that time, I have never felt the slightest desire to write fiction. I neither invented nor "doctored" the quotations in *In the Freud Archives* or in any other book and article I have written; Miss Himmelfarb's theory that my book about Jeffrey MacDonald is an unconscious confession of guilt about misquoting Jeffrey Masson is simply bizarre. I regret that Miss Himmelfarb lost her way in the thickets of summary judgment and based her long scold on a false premise.

JANET MALCOLM
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is clear from Gertrude Himmelfarb's article—and even more so from the actual opinion handed down by the appeals court—that, in his suit against Janet Malcolm and the *New Yorker*, Jeffrey Masson had the misfortune of running into a couple of judges with tin ears. Any judge who can write, as Arthur Alarcon did for the majority, that the phrase "intellectual gigolo" is no more defamatory than, and means substantively the same as, a "private asset but a public liability" has no feeling for words.

That is the example Miss Himmelfarb cites; the court's opinion lists many more. Readers may be interested in an even more glaring example, to be found in the section entitled "'Misleadingly Edited' Quotations." Here the issue is not one of putting words in someone's mouth; rather, it is altering a quotation so that it means very nearly the opposite of what was actually said. The following remarks of Masson's, concerning Freud Archive director Kurt Eissler, come directly from the tape:

> He was constantly putting various kinds of moral pressure on me [to keep silent about what Masson felt he'd discovered in Freud's papers]. . . . "Do you want to poison Anna Freud's last days? Have you no heart?" He called me up. "Have you no heart? Think of what she's done for you, and you are now willing to do this to her." I said, "What am I? What have I done? You're doing it, you're firing me. What am I supposed to do, thank you? Be grateful to you?" He said, "Well, you could never talk about it, you could be silent about it, you could swallow it. I know it's painful to you, but just live with it in silence." "Fuck you," I said, "why should I do that? Why? You know, why should one do that?" "Because it's the honorable thing to do, and you will save face, and, who knows, if you never speak about it and quietly and humbly accept our judgment, who knows, in a few years, if we don't bring you back?" Well, he had the wrong man.

After Janet Malcolm got through with them, Masson's words appeared as follows:

> He was always putting moral pressure on me. "Do you want to poison

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> Anna Freud's last days? Have you no heart? You're going to kill the poor old woman." I said to him, "What have I done? You're doing it. You're firing me. What am I supposed to do, be grateful to you?" "You could be silent about it. You could swallow it. I know it is painful for you. But you could just live with it in silence." "Why should I do that?" "Because it is the honorable thing to do." Well, he had the wrong man.

In the taped transcript, Masson refuses to be bought off by the prospect of a future job. In Miss Malcolm's version, with 33 crucial words deleted, he seems to be saying that appeals to his sense of honor are a waste of breath.

Yet the appeals court refused to see anything malicious in this alteration, ruling that . . . "the statement Malcolm ascribed to Masson was a rational interpretation of his ambiguous remarks."

Judge Alex Kozinski, in his eloquent dissenting opinion, showed himself to be far more sensitive to language—and its corruption—than his colleagues. He noted:

> Because quotations possess an immediacy and resulting credibility often lacking in ordinary narrative prose, minor changes in quoted language can have a major effect on how a speaker is perceived. A skilled writer can shade a speaker's words in subtle ways that will color a reader's perception far more effectively and permanently than if the writer paraphrases or otherwise discloses her editorial role.

Now that the case has reached the Supreme Court, I find it disturbing that a number of professional writers' groups, whom one might expect to be equally sensitive to the use and misuse of language, have filed briefs on behalf of the defendant. It strikes me that they have come in on the wrong side.

TED KLEIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Right to Misquote" Gertrude Himmelfarb professes "shock . . . to find echoes of [deconstructionist argument] in a case before the Supreme Court." Presumably, she is unaware of the Court's own legacy of constitutional deconstructionism. After all, this is a Supreme Court which has discovered (or invented) a right to privacy in "penumbras" that purportedly "emanate" from the text of the Constitution, which has equated flag burning with "speech," and which sees the Fourteenth Amendment as an open-ended invitation to prescribe radical social policies that its framers and ratifiers never contemplated. Thus, it would not be surprising if the Court were to rule in favor of Miss Malcolm because to do otherwise would undermine the legitimacy of many of its past decisions. . . .

One hopes the Supreme Court will not view *Masson* v. *Malcolm* as an opportunity to sanction the deconstruction of the English language. Yet the Orwellian possibility of longstanding and generally understood rules of grammar being overturned by judicial fiat is very real. While the Supreme Court has no constitutional authority to undermine the confidence of readers in the accuracy of those words "with those distinctive little squiggles around them," this is unlikely to deter it from imposing a deconstructionist Newspeak on us—ironically in the name of freedom of expression. . . .

PHILLIP GOLDSTEIN
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Gertrude Himmelfarb twice speaks of Jeffrey Masson as a "doctor." While I am not sure what level of education Masson has achieved, I do know that he is not a physician, and does not hold the M.D. degree. He is one of a legion of lay psychoanalysts, some of whom hold the Ph.D. (usually in clinical psychology, but it might also be in the humanities, or anything else). Other non-medical psychotherapists have varying kinds of academic credentials, ranging down to a high-school diploma.

There are, in short, doctors and then there are doctors. The M.D. degree, however, does entail knowledge of, and (usually) adherence to, the Hippocratic Oath, which is of some protection to vulnerable patients. While the Oath is much derided in this day of disrespect for authority and the professions, it still has meaning for the vast number of physicians, and our students receive instruction about its significance and application. Nothing I have read about Masson indicates that he has taken that oath, nor, of course, feels obliged to adhere to it in his professional life.

SEYMOUR C. POST, M.D.
Department of Psychiatry
College of Physicians & Surgeons,
Columbia University
New York City

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB writes:

Janet Malcolm's comments on the intricacies of "summary judgment" are informative but irrelevant. I was not concerned with the "hopelessly illogical" nature of the legal arguments used in her defense, and I made it clear that she herself denied having invented those quotations. What I was concerned with was the illogical—and, worse, insidious—nature of the arguments used by some of those who defend her on the ground that there is no essential difference between an actual quotation and an invented one, that a quotation can be altered to reflect some "higher" truth. Miss Malcolm weakens her own case if she sees nothing in this issue but a "long scold." She also weakens the elaborate psychoanalytic argument made in her book about Jeffrey MacDonald if she finds my simple and obvious psychoanalytic comments about herself to be "bizarre."

I agree with Ted Klein about the substantive difference between the taped and published quotations he cites, and with Phillip Goldstein about the deconstructionist implications of some previous Supreme Court decisions.

I am also tempted to agree with Seymour C. Post about the difference between "doctors" and "doctors" (although I suspect that even the M.D. variety is not immune from a deconstructionist interpretation of the Hippocratic Oath). But I don't feel that I can take it upon myself to deny the title to those Ph.D.'s, LL.D.'s, and all the other "doctors" legitimized by our institutions of higher learning.

"Indian Love Call"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Grenier's article, "Indian Love Call" [March], rebuking Kevin Costner's highly stylized image of the Sioux is excellent, however much I suspect that at least some of the "politically correct" would love to see Mr. Grenier staked out over an ant hill at high noon. . . . Granted, there were and still are some very peaceful and decent tribes; the Sioux, however, were most definitely not one of them.

For all of the killing of Indians by the "evil and greedy" white man, by far many more Indians died of often pedestrian diseases against which they had no immunity, inadvertently brought to the American continents from Europe.

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To take but one example out of innumerable similar unintentional tragedies: roughly 90 percent of the indigenous people of what is now essentially Mexico died of various Old World diseases within only a few decades of Cortez's conquest of the Aztecs.

While I am in no way endorsing Cortez's plundering or any of the more sordid, racist, and unarguably genocidal aspects of Manifest Destiny, another factor should also be borne in mind: the diseases inadvertently inflicted upon Native Americans became an enormous *medical* disaster, . . . far worse than any of the plagues that ravaged medieval Europe, a disaster that makes the current AIDS epidemic look like a modest head cold by comparison. These . . . plagues killed many times more Indians than did the U.S. Army, pioneers, and buffalo hunters combined. . . .

Dances With Wolves is a lush and gorgeous piece of cinema with many engaging aspects. . . . At the same time, however, it must be noted that it is largely a piece of pure fiction. . . .

WILLIAM E. ZAMZOW
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Richard Grenier, as usual, does not disappoint. Quite the contrary. His article is an absolutely remarkable exposé of the equally remarkable unhistoricity of the Oscar-winning *Dances With Wolves*. . . .

RICHARD D. WILKINS
Syracuse, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Grenier . . . is certainly the most erudite and cultured movie critic of our day. . . . It was a treat to read "Indian Love Call."

BARRY S. AUGENBRAUN
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Once again Richard Grenier demonstrates his unique ability to skewer where necessary and simply set the record straight. . . .

ANTHONY DEPALMA
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I enjoyed Richard Grenier's article on *Dances With Wolves*, even though he savaged a movie that I very much enjoyed, knowing full well as I watched it that it was a utopian version of Indian life. . . .

DOUG GLANT
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Many people root for the theoretical underdogs, but leftists are especially and naively sensitive to them. Rousseau's "noble savage" lurks in every inner-city gang member, welfare mother, drug abuser, bum, mental patient, and union member according to these sensitive types. The rest of us have supposedly sold out our natural selves for material wealth and are no longer human, humane, or happy. . . .

The romantic notions of Sioux life in *Dances With Wolves* place that life in a noble (transcendent) light that most leftists, environmentalists, Marxists, and warm fuzzy thinkers would find unacceptable in a movie dealing with the lives of, say, Kitchener, Gordon, or Custer. But in fact the twisting of reality in *Dances With Wolves* is simply the equivalent on the other side of Errol Flynn's skewed portrait of Custer in *They Died With Their Boots On*. Propaganda for the goose; propaganda for the gander. The "noble savage" is in the eye of the beholder.

DIRK S. HINNENKAMP
Columbus, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Attacking *Dances With Wolves*, as Richard Grenier does, on the grounds that Kevin Costner has silly ideas, that the movie is historically false, and that it is ideologically driven constitutes a surrender of the high ground which the Right must defend: the high ground of excellence. Mr. Grenier grudgingly and left-handedly admits that *Dances With Wolves* is a good movie, as if being good does not matter; but that is all that matters.

Mr. Grenier also admits that the movie has been very popular, yet ideologically-driven movies usually fall like stones—Mr. Grenier mentions Robert Redford's *Havana*. If a movie is popular, it clearly has some genuine appeal; and, if it is good, it is clearly rooted in a genuine story competently told.

Costner has retold the paradise story: the original, the universal story, deriving from one of the truly human impulses, the yearning for paradise. . . .

All paradise stories abound in images of innocence and purity. In *Dances With Wolves* . . . Indians were chosen to represent purity because the film is a Western, a story cycle that began with the pioneers as innocents and ended with Indians as innocents. That beginning and that ending derive from the nature of story cycles in general and the Western in particular.

In 1950 John Ford represented the Mormons in *Wagon Train* as nonviolent, peace-loving, idealistic pioneers, while in 1970 *Little Big Man* represented the Sioux as paradisiac innocents harried by the brutal white man. *Wagon Train* marks the beginning of the cycle and *Little Big Man* marks the end of the cycle. Anyone making a Western afterward could only retell a story already told. So Costner in essence retold *Little Big Man*, using the novel *Dances With Wolves* as a means of establishing the surface variations necessary to make it another story. . . .

Wagon Train's connection to history begins and ends with the fact that the Mormons did in fact move west, just as *Dances With Wolves*' connection to history begins and ends with the fact that there were Sioux and cavalry on the Plains in the 1860's. If ever history were mangled, John Ford mangled it in *Wagon Train*, since the actual Mormons bore as little resemblance to John Ford's Mormons as the actual Sioux bore to Kevin Costner's Sioux. Would Mr. Grenier complain, accusing John Ford of ideologically-driven error? John Ford was a superb storyteller who knew just what sort of Western was right for 1950, just as Kevin Costner is a good storyteller who knows what sort of Western is right for 1991. . . .

Few good storytellers can articulate where their stories come from or how they know what works and what doesn't, . . . but in Hollywood today movie types are expected to offer respectable political explanations. It is unfortunate that such respectability consists of ecohysteria, but that is not Costner's fault, it is our fault because we on the Right let the Left win the war of ideas. . . .

Kevin Costner tapped into a genuine and deep river of yearning for simplification, for a return of innocence, for a return to the beginning, for a recrudescence of the archaic; and he did it well enough. In the absence of an alternative explanation, Costner's audience might well accept his explanations as true and imagine that ecomania will satisfy that yearning.

HERBERT OSTRACH
Orlando, Florida

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have some bones to pick with Richard Grenier.

1. Our desire to establish "flourishing, modern, high-technology urban communities" was no excuse for destroying "a stone-age people who knew neither writing, nor metal of any kind, nor the wheel."

2. The fact that "there are twice as many people today in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as there were in all branches of the Sioux family together at the time the Sioux first encountered the white man" only supports Kevin Costner's statement that "the reality is—we didn't need to have it." Sioux Falls does not take up much room, approximately one-sixth of the state's population lives there, and South Dakota is a big state.

3. "Was Wounded Knee a massacre?" Mr. Grenier asks. Then he answers his own question: "28 cavalrymen were killed, as against 128 Sioux," including "women and children, almost all of them killed by the cavalry's Hotchkiss guns." Sounds like a massacre to me.

4. The saving of the white Seventh Cavalry by the black Ninth Cavalry proves what? That white soldiers at that time were not racist because they allowed black soldiers to save them when their only other choice was death? Come on, now.

5. It is true that Costner's movie is a romanticized version of history. It is true that the Indians were often violent and brutal and oppressed their women. But it is also true that the whites were often violent and brutal and oppressed *their* women. And it is also true that the Indians were vastly outnumbered, that white technology was far superior, and that most of the whites proclaimed themselves to be Christian.

KATHRYN L. MALESKI
Grand Rapids, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Grenier takes great pride in his own historical fluency as compared with other movie critics; they are not, in his view, "a knowledgeable group when it comes to history." Unfortunately, Mr. Grenier himself scants the historical record while attempting to set matters straight. Correctly dating the Great Sioux Uprising of 1862 from the depredations of Chief Little Crow in Minnesota, he deftly slips by the reasons for the Sioux chief's warmaking in an effort to depict the Sioux as irrational mad dogs.

The uprising began only after U.S. Indian agents once again failed to deliver food and money payments as required by treaty, at a time of particularly severe food shortages. Little Crow reluctantly accepted leadership of the Indian cause after some young Indian hotheads slaughtered a family of settlers at Acton, and then elsewhere. He realized his cause was lost, but felt he had no choice other than to stand with his people. Little Crow ultimately lost his life in the struggle, as did the U.S. Indian agent who, when told of Indian starvation, responded, "Let them eat grass," and was later found murdered with a clump of grass stuffed in his mouth.

I do not dispute Mr. Grenier's judgment of Kevin Costner's distortions of history; I do dispute his countervailing distortions of the conflict in his quest to malign the Sioux, and his general lack of appreciation for the tragic nature of a confrontation far better understood by Chief Little Crow, without benefit of Mr. Grenier's great historical expertise.

ROBERT MEYERSON
Atwater, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

To kill a people as a mass-supported state policy, human beings must be made to appear less than human. That is what Hitler did to the Jews. And that, too, is what Americans did to the American Indian. "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," the saying went. "Savages," we called them. Colonel John M. Chivington, asked why Indian babies had to be targeted for death, explained matter-of-factly, "nits make lice." Richard Grenier's article on *Dances With Wolves* glorifies the "logic" of this bone-chilling tradition.

Mr. Grenier is uncomfortable with Kevin Costner's treatment of Indian people as real-life human beings—he would rather hold on to the myth of the Indian as innately cruel and backward and, by extension, inferior and deserving of destruction. . . .

It is one thing to dislike a film, and debate its historical accuracy. It is another to glorify stereotypes of racial inferiority, and that, alas, is what Mr. Grenier has done.

Even today's Indians are targets. What was "most surprising" to Mr. Grenier about the film? It was that

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the "performances of the Indian actors are excellent." Should we be surprised that Indian people have among them those who have the necessities of acting? What would Jews or blacks or Asians say if a reviewer was "surprised" that people from these various groups could perform well, when finally given a chance to portray themselves?

Further to dehumanize the Indian, Mr. Grenier writes that the "Sioux made a great cult of self-inflicted pain." Presumably, he refers to the sacred Sun Dance, in which males tether themselves to a pole with a probe implanted in the skin of their chest. The Sun Dance, to this day, has tremendous religious significance—it allows men to feel a pain designed to be similar to that which women experience in childbearing. No one participates in the Sun Dance unwillingly; in fact, to dance is a great honor. . . .

In addition to this derogatory reference to Indian religious practice, Mr. Grenier describes Indians as though they were animals, "predatory [and] fierce." They were also "fanatical . . . unbalanced . . . brutal . . . scalping and murdering and torturing captives for entertainment." The U.S. Army, apparently, was a wondrous model of decorum in return.

Why did Mr. Grenier not mention the extermination of Indian men, women, and children with germ warfare—smallpox-infected blankets? Why did he not mention the "Trail of Tears," in which the Cherokees were forced to leave their ancestral home in the Southeast, and march to Oklahoma in the dead of winter? One out of four died during the march. And why did Mr. Grenier not mention a soldier the Cherokees, Seminoles, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks called "Sharp Knife?" "Sharp Knife" was responsible for the murder of thousands of Indian people, including women and children. In 1828 the American people elected Sharp Knife—Andrew Jackson—President of the United States. From the Indian point of view, it would be as if Lieutenant Calley won the presidency on the platform of My Lai.

And, while commenting about the years covered in *Dances With Wolves* (those during and immediately after the Civil War), why did Mr. Grenier not mention Sand Creek? There, in 1864, 600 Cheyenne were camped, 400 of them women and children. Most of the men were away hunting, having been promised safety by an American major. He had given them an American flag to hang, to show they were peaceful. The flag was hung, and women and children huddled underneath it. Yet soldiers attacked.

Lieutenant James Connor, a white eyewitness, described the slaughter, as Dee Brown chronicled it in his book, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*:

> In going over the battleground the next day I did not see a body of man, woman, or child but was scalped, and in many instances their bodies were mutilated in the most horrible manner . . . [in] numerous instances . . . men had cut out the private parts of females and stretched them over the saddle-bows and wore them over their hats while riding in the ranks.

Mr. Grenier's attempt to paint the Indians as warlike and mean and the white folk as "civilized" is simply unfair. And to suggest that the various Plains Indians were historically more warlike than whites is equally false. . . .

Mr. Grenier's discomfort with a positive treatment of Indians causes him to go beyond the timeline of *Dances With Wolves* to write, or rather rewrite, the history of the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee. Nearly 300 of Big Foot's band of 350 were killed, many of them women and children torn apart when the Army leveled its Hotchkiss guns into tepees. Many also died when they were running away, shot in the back. Many died when the Army left the wounded outside to freeze in the bitter December cold. The bodies were then dumped in a common grave that now has a curved metal structure at its foot. It is reminiscent of Auschwitz—not only for the appearance of the gate, but also because the Army's interception of Big Foot's band was in order to transport the band to a concentration camp. Their crime? It was illegal for Indians to practice their religion—even a religion such as the Ghost Dance, which incorporated many obviously Judeo-Christian messianic symbols.

Most troubling, Mr. Grenier seems to blame the Indians for their own massacre. "The key to the whole terrible incident," he writes,

> is that the Sioux were convinced that if they gave up their weapons they would be massacred. It is not possible to dismiss the notion that at the root of their fear lay the fact that massacres were a pattern of Sioux life—they themselves had certainly massacred Custer's men after the battle of The Little Big Horn.

Aside from forgetting that Big Foot's band was a group of poor religious men, women, and children on an Indian reservation in 1890, and not a war party of the years before 1868, Mr. Grenier ignores the fact that the Oglala and the other bands agreed to peace in the Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1868, and that it was the United States that violated that peace agreement and all the 367 others made with the Indian nations. In 1868, unable to protect the extensive line of railroad, the U.S. agreed that certain land would remain Indian, in return for peace. Within the land so designated in the peace treaty were the Black Hills. In 1874 General George Armstrong Custer confirmed a report of gold in the Black Hills, "from the grass roots down." The government tried to buy the Black Hills. The Indians were not interested. The Black Hills were where the most sacred spot on earth was; Papa Sapa they called it. Papa Sapa, in its way, is at least as holy to the Indians as the Temple Mount is to the Jews.

The U.S. government violated its pledge of peace, and went to war against the Indians for gold. Treatied Indian land was taken. Papa Sapa is now defaced with a glaring symbol of those who destroyed the Indian way of life. We call Papa Sapa Mount Rushmore.

Today the Oglalas live on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, one of the poorest places in the United States. Unemployment hovers between 80 and 90 percent. Their life expectancy is only to the forties. And the racism they and other Indians face as part of the larger American culture is brutal and generally unrecognized. Go into a convenience store in Rapid City and watch as a white clerk refuses to make change hand-to-hand to an Indian; it is usually done hand-to-counter. And where, for example, is the clamor about sports teams with mascots of Redskins and Chiefs? Could anyone for a minute conceive of mass acceptance of the Washington Blackskins or the Kansas City Rabbis—both with appropriately stereotypical caricatures?

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Mr. Grenier's main problem with the Oglalas seems to be that they survived. The fact is, by and large, the Indian nations that fought back against the attempts to kill them, their resources, and their way of life are around in remnants today. The Oglalas, for all their problems, *are* still here. Where, today, are the Raritans and the Willamettes and the hundreds of other "remarkably peace-loving" Indians whom Mr. Grenier would presumably call "good"?

KENNETH S. STERN
American Jewish Committee
New York City

Richard Grenier writes:

I warmly thank William E. Zamzow, Richard D. Wilkins, Barry S. Augenbraun, Anthony DePalma, and Doug Glant for their compliments, and think it very much worth remembering, as Mr. Zamzow points out, that the diseases brought quite inadvertently to the Americas by the white man were by far the most lethal aspect of European conquest for the native Indian population. The Mandan Indians of the upper Missouri basin, who figure so prominently in the journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition and were so much admired by the great painter of Indians, George Catlin, were almost completely wiped out by a series of epidemics of smallpox and cholera, diseases against which they had no inherited immunity. The last smallpox epidemic, in 1837, reduced the Mandan tribe to under 50 survivors. I certainly agree with Dirk S. Hinnenkamp about the persistence in American Left-liberal thinking of the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

But the bleak of holy ignorance

Southeast. This extensive passage is often omitted in the abridged editions of *Democracy in America* usually read in American universities (such as the Oxford University Press edition by Henry Steele Commager), so I briefly summarize it here from the French.

It was mid-winter, the snow on the ground frozen hard, huge masses of ice floating downriver. The Choctaw had with them their families, their wounded and sick, their newborn children, but neither tents nor wagons, only some provisions and their weapons. No cry or sob was heard among the Choctaw assembled on the river bank. All were silent. They had no room for dogs aboard their barks, but as soon as the dogs realized they were being left behind they set up an ungodly howling and plunged into the icy Mississippi, swimming desperately after their masters. Never would the terrible scene fade from his memory, wrote Tocqueville. But although much moved, he was convinced, deeply tragic though it was, that the historic process was inevitable.

The episode prompted in Tocqueville a discourse on military conquest in which he reflected that, historically, conquest has been happiest when the conquerors were superior only militarily and were thus absorbed by the higher civilization they had overcome by force of arms. Thus, famously, the "half-savage" Germanic peoples who conquered the Roman empire, or the Mongols who conquered China. "But when the side with physical force also possesses intellectual superiority" he wrote, "the conquered party seldom becomes civilized. It retreats or is destroyed." When conquerors are superior to

insight into history, was an actual eyewitness to the famous "Trail of Tears."

Herbert Ostrach, although quite courteous, misrepresents me. I abandon no high ground whatever. I do not "grudgingly and left-handedly admit that *Dances With Wolves* is a good movie, as if being good does not matter." Being good matters. But historical veracity also matters. The classic film example is Russia's Sergei Eisenstein, in my view perhaps the most influential director in cinema history. Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin* and his *October* are, I think, masterpieces. Yet as history they are fraudulent. In the 1905 Russian Black Sea naval mutiny there never was any march of the White Guards down the steps at Odessa (the most famous scene in the movie). In Lenin's October Revolution of 1917 there never was any "taking" of the Winter Palace (the climactic scene in *October*). Why is the falsification of history important? Because both Eisenstein and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin himself thought, probably with reason, that the cinema was the most powerful means of political propaganda the world had ever seen. The French singer and actor Yves Montand, a one-time Communist militant, an example among many, once told me he had converted to Marxism (he has since unconverted) by watching *Potemkin* and *October*. So I cannot agree with Mr. Ostrach that artistic excellence is "all that matters." And I did not in fact say that *Dances With Wolves* was a "good" movie. I think it is a so-so daydream movie, pretty to look at, but in verisimilitude and emotional maturity somewhere between *Hamburger* and *The Wiz*

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to the recent Gulf War, where the proportion of enemy dead to American dead was more like 1,000 to one? Should we rebaptize the Gulf War the "Gulf Massacre"? Has Miss Maleski ever heard of the women and children burned to death in the World War II bombings of Dresden and Tokyo? Should we rebaptize this conflict "World Massacre II"? And why stop there? How about the "Massacre of Iwo Jima"? The "Massacre of Midway"? The "Massacre of El Alamein"? I know research is hard slogging compared to watching movies, but look up the casualty figures, Miss Maleski. The saving of the white Seventh Cavalry by the black Ninth Cavalry at Wounded Knee "proves" that it was not a fight of white against non-white, but of those who identify with American society (as Miss Maleski obviously does not) against its adversaries. Those black troopers of the Ninth Cavalry had been made *free men* by the Union Army in which they fought. Their desertion rate in the freezing mountain winters was phenomenally low. Their military heroism in the defense of the United States was among the highest in the history of the U.S. cavalry. The only group Miss Maleski might imaginatively identify with at Wounded Knee was the newsmen, but, strangely, the newsmen were blazing away at the Sioux like everybody else since, if they had fallen, they would have been scalped alive. "Come on now!," I can see Miss Maleski scolding these fighting reporters in the name of Christian virtue. Miss Maleski's scalp would have been her willing and gracious sacifice, I'm sure, for peace and racial harmony.

As Robert Meyerson ought to be able to see from what I have written above, my purpose is not to depict the Sioux as "irrational mad dogs," nor do I lack an appreciation of the tragic nature of their confrontation with the ever-expanding United States. I am fully aware of the grievances that provoked the Sioux uprising led by Chief Little Crow, and if Mr. Meyerson feels the proper response to nonpayment of foods and moneys is a wild rampage of fire and slaughter, I will stoutly defend his right to his opinion—although I suspect he might alter it somewhat if he were the one being slaughtered.

But I am frankly awed by the majesty of Kenneth S. Stern's pseudo-learning. Rarely is historical illiteracy displayed before the public in such detail. It is quaint to see Dee Brown, a popular historian, quoted as a scholarly source. Since Mr. Stern seems to fancy himself something of a scholar himself, he might one day want to read the texts referred to by numbers in the footnotes to *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. If he can face such a grueling task, he will notice that every time Dee Brown in his source material comes across something hateful done by a white man it goes into his book, but everything charitable or even reasonable is left out. With Indians, of course, it is the reverse. Everything stately or noble an Indian does is in. Everything brutal or savage is out. If Mr. Stern were to take the trouble to read the Declaration of Independence, he might be interested to note that I am in the bone-chilling company of Thomas Jefferson, who in that document refers to our Western frontier's "merciless Indian savages" whose "known Rule of Warfare is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions." Thus the Declaration of Independence. If my correspondent should perchance read of colonial New England's celebrated antinomian controversy, he might note that its most brilliant figure, Mistress Anne Hutchinson, was slaughtered by Indians.

But Mr. Stern must get a grip on himself. There is not one single word in my article—not one single word—which suggests that I think Indians are "racially inferior" or their customs "innate," or that seeks to "dehumanize" them in any way. Like Tocqueville, I think the situation of the American Indian was tragic and deeply moving. Mr. Stern distorts, twists, and deforms everything I write. It has never even crossed my mind that anything about Indian customs was genetic. But that the culture of many Indians of the past was cruel is no "myth." Thousands and thousands of accounts attest to this, and if Mr. Stern doesn't know it by now, I'm afraid he never will. He is quite comical, moreover, on the subject of "religious practices." The Aztec religion, for its spring festival honoring the god Xipe Totec, called upon its priests to flay young virgins and dress themselves up in their skins. To celebrate the enlargement of their great temple at Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs, very religiously, slaughtered 20,000 human captives. But although these facts are in countless books on cultural anthropology (as is the Sioux Sun Dance, which I incidentally never mention), perhaps they should be censored since, according to Mr. Stern, they are "derogatory to Indian religious practice." After all, if a man's religion calls upon him to kill a young virgin and dance around in her skin, to criticize the practice would be derogatory to his religion. I don't know what some college-educated Indian feminist has been feeding Mr. Stern about the Sioux Sun Dance, and I'm sorry to have to give him such a hard lesson in Indian life, but the Sun Dance has absolutely nothing to do with the pain women experience in childbirth.

The Sioux leaders of the Ghost Dancers (a quite different affair from the Sun Dance) were, in a trance, calling on their followers to drive the white man from the land. Indian informants reported that massacres of whites were coming. But Mr. Stern has decided that the Ghost Dance was just a "religion," much like Judaism, I gather. For the most bizarre aspect of Mr. Stern's pseudo-learning is the similarity he seems to find between Indian and Jewish cultures.

As for the use of Indian names by sports teams, the reason the Kansas City team is called the "Chiefs" is a tribute to the American Indian's prodigious—no myth here, either—bravery and fighting spirit. In this connection it is worth noting that in 1984 the *Dartmouth Review* conducted a survey of the leaders of every single Indian tribe throughout the country to discover their opinion on the controversy raging over Dartmouth's banning of the school's Indian symbol. The results were stunning. What did they think of Dartmouth's Indian? "A compliment," "fine," "great," "a tribute"—this last from the vice chairman of the Tribal Council of South Dakota's Lower Brule Sioux. One tribal leader wrote, "The people who are against the symbol are misinformed." Another wrote, "I think most of the people who object to the Indian symbol are not Indians. They are probably envious." And over and over again, to Dartmouth: "BRING BACK THE INDIAN." The final tally? *Total Chiefs Expressing No Opinion*: 15. (These refrained almost entirely because they thought the question should be decided on a local level.) *Total Chiefs Opposing the Indian Symbol*: 11. *Total Chiefs Favoring*

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the Indian Symbol: 125. This is well over ten to one in favor. Lewis H. Barlow, Chief of the Ottawa tribe in Oklahoma, wrote: "We have 63 tribes in Okahoma, and I've never heard any objections like the ones you're telling me about." Chief Barlow wrote proudly: "We have the Kansas City Chiefs," adding that the team used an Indian designer from his own Ottawa tribe.

On a higher level of civility and sophistication than Mr. Stern, a discussion of my "Indian Love Call" appeared in a column by Aims McGuinness in the May 13 issue of the *New Republic*. According to Mr. McGuinness, Kevin Costner, in *Dances With Wolves*, goes overboard in merely turning the "old red-and-white Manicheanism on its head. This time around, the Indians are the cowboys and the cowboys are the Indians." On the other hand, he says, Richard Grenier, in COMMENTARY, goes overboard in the other direction, arguing that "the Indians were the savages that whites always thought they were and blames them for not learning how to farm." Mr. McGuinness writes that the sad fact omitted by these critical commentators (I become plural) is that "we know very little about the daily life of 19th-century Indians." Let Mr. McGuiness speak for himself. There exists a vast literature, in fact, much of it by writers who lived among Indians and were extremely sympathetic to them.

But a curious aspect of Mr. McGuinness's remarks, behind his faulting of Kevin Costner for finding Indians too wonderful and of me for finding them too savage, is his plain implication that if we only knew enough about the subject we would find Indians poised delicately in between, neither excessively wonderful nor excessively savage, much like whites perhaps. Whites, we must not forget, are guilty of "sin" in their treatment of Indians, and of sin which should be "expiated." Indians apparently know not sin. For Mr. McGuinness, who makes free use of Christian phraseology and of grand assumptions based on his judicious non-reading of the literature, seems to yearn, give or take a bit here or there, for some kind of measured equivalence or equality between Indian society and white society. Indeed, an enraptured madness for equality is everywhere in American

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intellectual life today. People are equal. Races are equal. Religions are equal. Cultures are equal. Civilizations are equal. Tocqueville be damned. The Indians and us? Dead even.

But is it really equality which evokes the passion of these enthusiasts? Seen historically, the assumption of equality between contending civilizations is peculiar. Significantly, Mr. McGuinness and my other critics might note that this generous attribution of equality has yet to be extended to Saddam Hussein's Iraq or to Adolf Hitler's Germany. Nor is such a development likely, since rather too much is known about both Iraq's Baathists and Germany's Nazis. Indeed, it is generally cultures about which the speaker is profoundly ignorant which benefit from such artificial tolerance—which is in fact not tolerance at all but merely a club with which to devalue and denigrate the speaker's own society.

Sinologists

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a China-watcher since World War II, I agree on the whole with the thrust of Charles Horner's article, "Sinology in Crisis" [February]. Mr. Horner, however, gives the impression that he thinks no American China-watcher was seriously critical of Mao & Co. before about 1970. Not so. One exception is Richard Walker (in *China under Communism*, 1955), to whom Mr. Horner gives honorable mention in the post-1970 context. Another exception is me (in *Major Governments of Asia*, 1958, and elsewhere), to whom Horner does not. There are others, to whom I say, in the spirit of the future Priscilla Alden, why don't you speak for yourselves?

HAROLD C. HINTON
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Charles Horner . . . has drawn a gross caricature of contemporary Chinese studies. First, his criticism of John K. Fairbank is quite unfair. I believe Fairbank was wrong in his rosy assessment of President Nixon's visit to China in 1972, and that he has been consistently wrong for several decades. However, his towering achievements as an educator and scholar are nowhere mentioned in Mr. Horner's indictment. Some of us in contemporary Chinese studies have long disagreed with Fairbank, and have lectured and written at length to that effect, but we have never doubted his sincerity and honesty. To my knowledge, no one before Mr. Horner has questioned Fairbank's integrity. . . .

Now, a small, selected contribution to Mr. Horner's broader education in contemporary Chinese studies: to begin with, journalists were not the "first" challengers of what I would call the "benign" or "romantic" view of Chinese Communism. The late Laszlo Ladany, S.J., started his hard-headed weekly, *China News Analysis* (*CNA*), in 1953, and it remained a widely-read, essential source until well into the 1980's. Mr. Horner can find *CNA* in the Library of Congress . . . or he can order a copy of Ladany's 1988 work, *The Communist Party of China and Marxism, 1921-1986*, from Stanford University's Hoover Institution. Next, Mr. Horner should read Michael Lindsay's *China and the Cold War* (Melbourne, 1954). Lord Lindsay, who taught for many years at the American University in Washington, D.C., had spent the Sino-Japanese war years in Mao's capital of Yenan, and was very favorably disposed toward Chinese Communism *until* he returned to China for a visit after "liberation" in 1949. His work is a devastating analysis of the early years of Mao's tyranny.

Next (but here Mr. Horner must monitor his blood pressure), he should peruse Stuart Schram's *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (1963), and Franz Schurmann's *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (1966). Both books admirably *fit* his thesis. To Schram, Mao was an intellectual warrior-type, a revolutionary romantic (and poet, to boot). To Schurmann, the Chinese Communist party is really just another organization (like, say, General Electric), and can best be understood by reading Reinhard Bendix and other organizational theorists, rather than by a close comparative study of Mao, Lenin, and Stalin. I am surprised Mr. Horner did not mention these well-known monographs, and can only assume they predate his limited area of interest and study.

The point, however, is that neither work went unchallenged. Arthur A. Cohen's brilliant study, *The Communism of Mao Tse-tung* (1964), clearly shows Mao to be nothing less than a Chinese Stalin. Cohen and Schram later joined in a lively debate, "What is Maoism?," in *Problems of Communism* (September-October 1966, and March-April 1967). Cohen won by a knockout.

Now Mr. Horner is ready to familiarize himself with the *China Quarterly* (London), the premier scholarly journal in the field for some 30 years. He could start with any of the several critical analyses by Philip Bridgham—for example, "Mao's Cultural Revolution: Origins and Development," in the January-March 1967 issue. These are solid, rigorous assessments of Mao's dictatorship. In several of my own books and articles over the last 28 years (I have written twelve books and numerous articles on the subject, and am currently director of Asian Studies for the Asian division of the University of Maryland, in Tokyo), I have dealt at length with Mao's fanaticism, his megalomania, and the terrible cost he was exacting from the Chinese people. In short, we did not need finally to have our eyes opened by the excellent journalism of Fox Butterfield and John Fraser, nor did they "pioneer in reporting on Chinese dissidence."

Finally, Mr. Horner should secure a set of the three-volume masterpiece by the late Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, especially the first volume, *The Problem of Intellectual Continuity* (1958). Turn to page 162 and read the following:

> The categories of Chinese Communist thought are not traditional. This is the salient fact. . . . For the substance of the respective orthodoxies must count for something, and Confucian harmony is not Marxist struggle, Confucian permanence is not Marxist process, Confucian moralism is not Marxist materialism.

Written over 30 years ago, true then and true now, this judgment was and still is shared by many of Joseph Levenson's colleagues. He is sorely missed.

In sum, then, I am sure many students of Chinese Communist affairs would resent being tarred with the brush of Mr. Horner's blanket indictment. I know I do.

DENNIS J. DOOLIN
Tokyo, Japan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one who has had experience

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with the shallowness of American Sinology, I agree totally with Charles Horner's brief description of the fallacies perpetrated by American Sinologists.

John K. Fairbank, the so-called "dean" of American Sinologists, is the one who most needs scrutiny. After the Tiananmen massacre, Fairbank wrote in the *New York Review of Books* that the students and the Red Guards "seemed superficially two of a kind, foreboding chaos and anarchy." Unfortunately, the poison of this remark may outlast the beast itself. Fairbank's status as a Harvard professor for 41 years enabled him to train a large number of students who now occupy teaching positions in prominent universities throughout the U.S. Even though Fairbank himself may fade away, the "Fairbank school" is definitely still in its heyday. If American Sinologists really want to correct the wrong course taken in the past, their very first step should be to renounce Fairbankism.

One of the reasons American Sinologists have been so ignorant of China is their low level of proficiency in the Chinese language. It sounds odd that an "expert" in Chinese studies should not have a solid grasp of Chinese, yet, speaking from personal experience, I know this to be the case. The eminent Simon Leys, who first began the process of examining the integrity of Sinology twenty years ago, once described himself as someone "who has not been shielded from the truth by a blessed ignorance of the Chinese language." If all those Sinologists are unwilling to sharpen their basic tool—the Chinese language—perhaps they should abandon the title. . . .

I share Mr. Horner's skepticism about current attempts at "self-criticism" within the profession. To be frank, I have already given up all hope where Sinologists are concerned and agree instead with Steven Mosher:

> If we in the West understand the People's Republic better today, our clearer vision does not come from academic China-watchers, foreign-policy experts, or politicians, whose past portraits often have been misleading, self-serving, even false. It comes from the Chinese people, who have begun speaking to us directly about their aspirations for democracy, economic freedom, and human rights.

KIN-MING LIU
Missoula, Montana

CHARLES HORNER writes:

I appreciate Harold Hinton's reminder that there were indeed China-watchers who parted from the dominant outlook in the profession. I am, in another way, also pleased that Dennis J. Doolin seems to have responded to Mr. Hinton's suggestion that they come forward and identify themselves. I am happy to accept his own description of himself, and even the bibliography (of which I am aware), but his writing about the profession as a whole, I fear, underscores my main point. He leaps to its defense mostly by adopting the snide condescension of the "expert" who, unable to recall meeting me at an Association of Asian Studies convention, assumes I need to be directed toward the card catalogue.

But that particular pose aside, Mr. Doolin's case is weak. Does he really think that the skeptics and critics of Mao's China ever carried the debate in the intra-professional disputes on the moral, political, and economic worth of Maoism? He refers me to a summary quotation from a book by the late Joseph Levenson. I have no quarrel with the point of the sentences but, as an honorable Sinologist's indictment of Maoist mass murder, I find it a bit too subtle. As the teller of the joke that falls flat often says, "I guess ya hadda be there."

Kin-ming Liu reminds us of the impatience of Chinese themselves with the American Sinologists who explained away China's sufferings under Communism. In particular, the Chinese students in this country continue to express their astonishment at "mainstream" opinion about their country. And why not? Only lately has there been any major challenge to the dominant assumption that the Maoist regime was anything other than the logical, natural, even desirable outcome of China's "modernization." Only lately have earlier democratic movements been accorded anything other than, well, snide condescension.

The argument used to be that Chinese totalitarianism was the necessary cost of the country's economic development, but the Chinese themselves are also educating the rest of the world about that. A recent item in the *Wall Street Journal*, worth quoting in full, puts it thus:

> China has published an official estimate of the nation's economic losses due to Mao's Communist experiments. A dispatch by the state-run Xinhua news agency cited in Hong Kong's South China *Morning Post* confesses that those crazed political movements cost China some $115 billion in economic damage.
>
> Consider the alternative. Figure that under a free-market system the mainland Chinese might be earning somewhere in the ballpark of their Taiwan free-market cousins. Say, about $10,000 a year. Take half that, or $5,000, just to guard against overestimating. Subtracting China's current per-capita annual income of about $350, that means a truly capitalist China would this past year have earned about $4,650 per person more than it did. Multiply that by China's 1.1 billion people, to get a probable loss in 1990 alone—due to Communism—of some $5.1 trillion.

Now, that's something worth writing home about.

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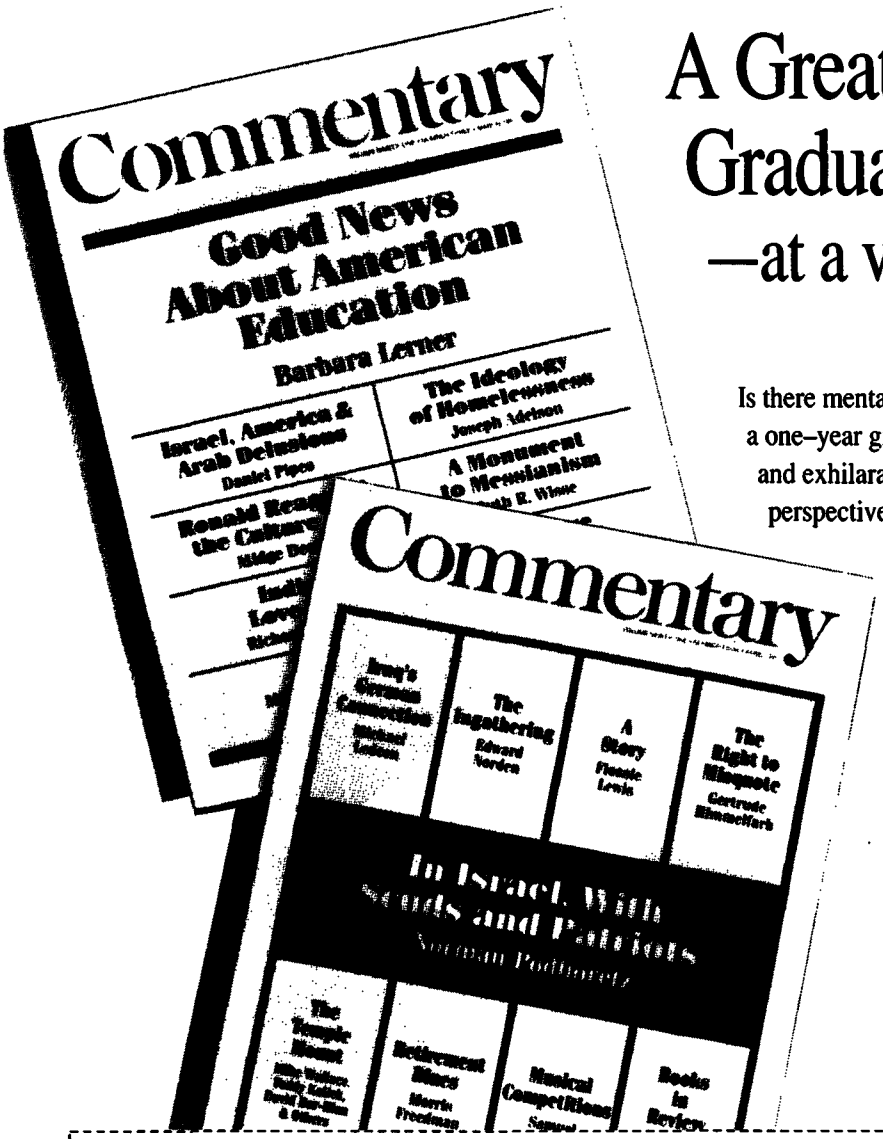

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How We Helped Saddam Survive

Laurie Mylroie

In the aftermath of Desert Storm, one of the most brilliant military operations in U.S. history, Saddam Hussein, the figure responsible for the war, the devastation, and the misery, retains his seat of power. Since the ceasefire, over two million Iraqis have been made refugees, while some unknown number—at least 100,000—have been killed by Saddam Hussein's forces. Some responsibility for this dismal course of events rests with the United States—specifically, with ill-conceived American notions about the Iraqi polity, about the constituency that might oust Saddam, and about the nature of the regime that might follow him. Ultimately, these compounded misunderstandings, themselves the product of a shallow realpolitik, contributed to a human catastrophe carried out under the watch of the U.S. military in what should have been its moment of undiluted triumph.

It would be surprising if Iraq's naked and unprovoked aggression against Kuwait, and the outrageous acts that followed it, had *not* prompted the Bush administration at some point after August 2, 1990 to seek the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Indeed, according to Bob Woodward's *The Commanders*, soon after the invasion of Kuwait President Bush issued orders to the Central Intelligence Agency to do precisely that, because "if there ever was a case for covert action, . . . this was it."

At the time Iraq invaded Kuwait, however, a ban existed on any meetings between administration officials and members of the Iraqi opposition. That opposition consisted, and still consists, of diverse groups and figures, until recently uncoordinated in their efforts but sharing one goal—ousting Saddam Hussein. Some opposition elements are unsavory opportunists, some are religious fanatics, and some are very distinguished individuals who have chosen to risk life and fortune to liberate their homeland from a dark tyranny. Yet administration officials who tried during the crisis to meet with any of these elements soon found to their surprise that they were forbidden to do so.

According to Peter Galbraith, a Senate staffer long sympathetic to the plight of Iraq's Kurds, the ban went back to a June 1988 meeting between Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and the State Department. That meeting, held to signal U.S. objection to Iraq's use of chemical weapons in the Kurdish city of Halabja two months before, came under protest from Turkey, which has its own complicated relations with the Kurds living within its borders, and of course from Iraq, and so a prohibition was imposed on further contacts. But the ban applied not only to Kurds but to the entire Iraqi opposition, including Shiites and even liberal democrats, and was kept in force until March 27 (by which time Turkey had established covert contacts with the Kurdish leadership that eventually issued in a public meeting with Talabani in Ankara).

Why did the administration maintain the ban? Part of the explanation lies in its view of Iraq's future. The administration was fixed on promoting a coup within Iraq's ruling elite. As a National Security Council staffer, frantically seeking to abort an inadvertently scheduled meeting with opposition elements, protested, "You know we don't want to talk to those people. Our policy is to get rid of Saddam, not his regime."

Still, it is not entirely clear how meeting the opposition would have jeopardized the chances of promoting a coup. Such contacts might in fact have helped, as elements in the Iraqi opposition had connections with would-be coup-makers in Baghdad. Most importantly, meetings with the opposition would have provided administration officials with a fuller view of Iraq, an extremely secretive country about which precious little was known.

Another possible explanation for the ban is that the U.S. was coordinating its policy with its Arab coalition partners, particularly Saudi Arabia. According to one Gulf journalist, Riyadh had asked the U.S. for a free hand with the Iraqi opposition, in order to have influence in a post-Saddam Iraq.

But the Saudis, because of their alignment with

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Saddam Hussein during the latter years of the Iran-Iraq war, were in fact unfamiliar with his Iraqi opponents. Besides, like the U.S., the Saudis basically wanted to see the existing Iraqi regime, meaning Sunni-based military rule, continue in power. The legitimacy of the Saudi monarchy rests on an extremely conservative vision of Sunni Islam, and the Saudis discriminate against their own Shiite minority, which resides mainly in the oil-bearing eastern province along the Persian Gulf coast.

Typically, when the Saudis try to promote their interests in the Arab world, they seek out figures with little independent base who will be "their men," and then give them substantial sums of money. That is what happened in the case of Iraq. The Saudis fixed on an Iraqi exile named Salah Omar Ali al-Takriti, who became their principal candidate in the opposition and, along with a former director of Iraqi radio, one of the two managers of a Saudi-based radio station, the "Voice of Free Iraq," financed by the CIA.

Al-Takriti was a problematic personality, disliked by the established opposition for what it considered his harsh and brutal character. He had been a member of the Iraqi Baath party's regional command when it seized power for the second time in July 1968. Then the narrowly-based Baath, having no more than 5,000 members, faced the considerable problem of avoiding a repetition of events five years earlier, when it took power only to be ousted within nine months. This time a systematic reign of terror was initiated. In October the regime claimed to have discovered a Zionist spy ring, and al-Takriti was put in charge of the "investigations." Three months later fourteen Iraqis, eleven of them Jews, were publicly hanged, as al-Takriti and other high Baathist officials delivered lengthy speeches against "Zionism" and "imperialism," haranguing the crowds that were assembled in Baghdad's Liberation Square to witness the day-long event.

The next year, presumably on the basis of his performance in Liberation Square, al-Takriti was made Minister of Culture and Information. But he soon left for Lebanon after an apparent dispute with Saddam Hussein. Rehabilitated, he was then given a variety of ambassadorial postings. In the early 1980's, he served as Iraq's UN ambassador, resigning that post in August 1982 when it looked as if Iraq might lose the war with Iran.

Al-Takriti then began to promote himself as an alternative to Saddam, advertising his qualifications from a New Jersey-based exile as being Sunni, Arab, and from Takrit, the hometown of Saddam Hussein and most of his closest colleagues. But in August 1990 we find him heading the London-based international freight division of Iraqi Airways, an appointment he reportedly received after addressing a personal appeal to Saddam Hussein. Al-Takriti's enduring commercial connection with Baghdad was another reason many in the Iraqi opposition did not like him. They thought he might be an agent for the regime.

The Saudis, who evidently did not share that concern, seem to have accepted al-Takriti's assurances that he could arrange a coup against Saddam through his contacts inside Iraq. When Iraqi opposition figures visited Saudi Arabia in early 1991, King Fahd insisted that any meeting with the delegation include the participation of al-Takriti and Saad Jabr, a Shiite with a similarly narrow base. (The meeting was not held.) In early March, a senior Saudi intelligence official insisted to members of the Iraqi opposition in Damascus that they take on al-Takriti and Jabr as equal partners or they would get no economic assistance from Saudi Arabia or political support from the U.S.

Al-Takriti did manage to secure some minor successes: several Iraqi emissaries abroad defected during the crisis, and al-Takriti was said to have made the arrangements. However, the coup he promised did not materialize.

While it is difficult to know how seriously the U.S. took the Saudis' maneuvering, there is no doubt that the Bush administration itself looked to an intra-party coup in Baghdad. Washington-based experts on Iraq maintained up until the March 1991 revolts by Kurds and Shiites that the Baath party was a viable political institution with a substantial base, capable of running the country, while the Iraqi population, alone or assisted by the allies, was incapable of devising a better alternative.

True, senior officials made vague pronouncements calling on the Iraqi people to decide their own fate, quite as if they did not live under a regime of systematized terror; most notable was President Bush's February 15 statement appealing to "the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands to force Saddam Hussein the dictator to step aside." But as the Iraqi people were soon to learn, what the President envisaged was either a palace coup or a situation like Romania where the army would quickly join a rebellious population to defeat the dictator and his security forces.

The army never got that far. The day after Desert Storm ended, riots erupted in Basra as soldiers returning from Kuwait began attacking offices, symbols, and functionaries of the regime. They were joined by the populace, and the unrest quickly spread among the Shiites in southern Iraq, and then to the Kurdish north. The Shiite rebels addressed a letter pleading for help to U.S. forces in southern Iraq. But the administration, whose perception of the Shiites was formed by our experience with Iran and by the 1983 bombing of the Marine headquarters in Lebanon, was not inclined to respond.

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After the first week of the revolt, the U.S. still apparently expected a coup. "We are banking on the military or Baath leaders to pull him out of power as the unrest worsens," explained one official. A week later, the administration took a more forward position. On March 13 the President cautioned Saddam against using helicopters to suppress the rebellions, and repeated the warning on March 16. On March 14 and 24, U.S. heavy-armor units reoccupied positions in southern Iraq in what was viewed as an effort to increase pressure on Saddam Hussein. In the same period, on March 20 and 22, two Iraqi airplanes, flying in violation of the provisional ceasefire terms, were shot down.

On the day the second plane was downed, General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made the most explicit statement to date of American intent to use its presence in Iraq to promote Saddam's ouster. According to a report in the New York *Times*, Powell said that

> U.S. military forces in southern Iraq would seek to maintain pressure on President Saddam Hussein of Iraq "for some months to come" while insurrections whittle away at his power. . . . "While the entire civilized world [is] watching," including United States air patrols that forbid the Iraqi air force any use of the skies, Mr. Hussein "has to be a little careful how he goes about suppressing the various insurrections that are taking place."

Yet it was also reported (in the Washington *Post*) that the administration had still not resolved the debate over whether U.S. forces should remain in Iraq, "restraining Saddam's ability to suppress the rebellions, or withdraw so Iraqi military forces could consolidate control and then possibly challenge Saddam's claim to leadership."

On March 26 this debate abruptly ended when the White House decided that it would allow Saddam Hussein to suppress Iraq's popular revolts virtually unhindered. Two days later, on March 28, Iraqi troops began a "major attack" on the Kurds; on March 30 Teheran reported that more than one million people were fleeing northern Iraq; on March 31 the President left Washington for a Florida vacation. An administration official explained, "It is a somewhat painful acceptance of a certain reality. You manage it in as low-key a way as possible and hope you get through it."

With its March 26 decision, the U.S. lost the moral high ground and the political initiative. In the week following, as Kurdish refugees began pouring across international boundaries, the administration postponed action. As an official later said, "We wanted to wait for the civil war [*sic*] to be over so our involvement would be seen not as a decision to help the rebels overthrow Saddam, but as a decision to provide humanitarian help."

Saddam Hussein's view of how to end that "civil war" was to massacre whole villages to precipitate flight en masse, then attack the fleeing refugees with helicopter gunships. With the U.S. resolved on delay, worried in part over the interpretation that might be placed on an effort to save a population being subjected to genocidal assault, it fell to *France* to take the initiative in getting UN Security Council approval of Resolution 688, which "condemned" Iraq's repression of its civilian population; the U.S. wanted a lesser term, "deplore." *Britain* took the initiative in calling for safe havens for the Kurdish refugees, securing European Community (EC) endorsement of the idea; the U.S. reluctantly accepted the proposal after a week's hesitation. *Germany* took the initiative in seeking to establish a war-crimes tribunal, securing EC agreement to that idea, too; the State Department led an administration effort to oppose and waylay it.

The reasons for the March 26 decision remain unclear. General Powell feared a "quagmire," but four days earlier, as we have seen, he was saying that the U.S. would remain in southern Iraq "for some months to come," and in any case the President had repeatedly overridden his top general's caution since the crisis began. Threats to Iraq's "territorial integrity" were raised. But what did that mean? Neither the Kurds nor the Shiites had a separatist agenda, and by March 26 the Shiite revolt had anyway been largely quashed. Had the U.S. thrown its support to one or both of the revolts, most likely the many elements within the Iraqi military fundamentally resentful of Saddam's rule would have joined what would have looked to be the winning side, and the regime would have been quickly toppled. It was an option that could have been tried with minimal risk.

But then, administration policy was "to get rid of Saddam, not change the regime." It could even be said that the administration sought to *preserve* the regime, because it equated that regime with Iraq's "territorial integrity." Thus, nightmare scenarios were generated from almost any contemplated change in Iraq's status quo. Saudi officials reportedly told the U.S. during the March uprisings that they no longer feared Saddam Hussein; the greater danger was Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim, an Iraqi cleric in Teheran, whose forces had crossed into Iraq and joined the Shiite revolt. In mid-April, as the U.S. considered the European proposal for safe havens for the Kurds, the Saudis, joined by Egypt, warned about threats to Iraq's "territorial integrity." Presumably, even protecting the Kurds could ultimately precipitate changes in Iraq that might imperil the Saudi monarchy.

YET even if it were accepted that the popular revolts threatened Iraq's territorial integrity, why should that have been such an overriding concern to the U.S.? After all, we learned to live easily enough with the Lebanonization of Lebanon. The terrorism and hostage-

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taking perpetrated from Lebanese territory were vile and reprehensible, but they threatened no critical U.S. interests.

To be sure, the U.S. was worried that internal developments in Iraq could ultimately jeopardize the stability of the Saudi monarchy and its control over the oil of the eastern province. It is, undoubtedly, an important American interest that Saudi Arabia's oil remain in the hands of a friendly government. But what price should another country's population be obliged to pay for this, particularly when it is unclear whether those oil supplies are seriously endangered in the first place?

Most doubtful of all is whether the greater threat to American interests on March 26 was posed by the widespread popular opposition to Saddam Hussein's rule or by his continued tenure in power. The chief of Saudi intelligence, for one, held a dissident view: he was for lending support to the revolts. Under most circumstances, it would seem self-evident that a situation in which 20 percent of the population rules the other 80 percent cannot bring stability—presumably a prime American interest in the area. It would also seem self-evident that when a nation is at a historical turning point and a new regime may be formed, the U.S., in principle, should favor democracy, or at least some movement in the direction of democracy. Yet *no* senior administration official—with the single exception of Robert M. Gates, on one occasion—expressed even a qualified preference for constitutional government in Baghdad.*

Before this war, almost 10 percent of the Iraqi population—nearly one-and-one-half million people—lived in exile. With the war, over two million more became refugees. Currently, more than 20 percent of the Iraqi population, a figure approaching four million people, have been dislocated. What is the limit before a regime is judged too reprehensible to be acceptable to us? And if we are prepared to accept such brutal carnage in Iraq, by what right do we mean to interpose ourselves and our "good offices" in other bloody and controverted areas of the Middle East?

* On May 22, Secretary of State James Baker went so far as to say: "I believe that a new Iraqi political compact which reflects the pluralistic makeup of its population . . . is possible, and such a compact must be arrived at by negotiations among all Iraqis, and not by force." But this hardly amounts to a ringing endorsement of democracy or constitutional government.

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Bad Advice for the Democrats

Irwin M. Stelzer

"New Blueprints for the Left," sighs a contented *Newsweek* headline over a story about Robert Kuttner's *The End of Laissez-Faire: National Purpose and the Global Economy After the Cold War** and Robert B. Reich's *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism.*† The Washington *Post* sees the two as leaders of "a new group of upstarts, liberals trying to upend the conservative revolution," and whose books "are bidding to do for this decade what [Jude] Wanniski's and [George] Gilder's did for the last." For "both of these books," we are told, "are more sophisticated than much of what has passed for Democratic economic thinking."

Just in the nick of time. Long in search of a coherent view of the post-New Deal world, liberal Democrats have lurched from Jimmy Carter's stagflation to Walter Mondale's threatened tax increases to Michael Dukakis's attempt to spread to the nation the benefits of the Massachusetts economic miracle. All overlaid with a dash of Gephardt-style protectionism. Now come the two Roberts with diagnoses of the nation's economic ills, and with proposed cures that are to provide Democrats with a road map leading them out of the wilderness.

The Reich/Kuttner map is certainly well drawn, a result of the admirable ability of both authors to present economic arguments in clear, if somewhat excited, prose. But unfortunately for their cheering section, the map leads nowhere—except perhaps back to where the Democrats got stalled in the first place.

It is not that Reich/Kuttner have nothing to say. They both tellingly demonstrate that, thanks to the post-World War II liberalization of the world trading system, nations can now specialize in producing things they make best and most cheaply, and exchange those things for the efficiently produced goods of other nations. This permits Americans to buy Japanese cars that better suit their tastes and pocketbooks than do American cars, and Japanese to buy Boeing airplanes. True, there are protectionist distortions: America puts Detroit on the dole by limiting the number of cars Japan can sell here, and Japan forces its consumers to subsidize small rice farmers and large property speculators by keeping cheap American rice out of Japanese shops. But these exceptions aside, the liberal trading system works: witness the almost tenfold growth in the value of world trade in the postwar period.

Kuttner excels in describing how that trading system was constructed during what he calls "a remarkable half-decade of statecraft [that] began at Bretton Woods." Reich excels in providing striking instances of the ways in which trade has blurred the national identities of the world's leading corporations. He notes as one striking instance that Canada's Northern Telecom sells in America equipment produced in a Japanese-owned factory in North Carolina, and that "American" vehicles contain a large portion of parts produced in Japanese-owned plants, both here and abroad. An even more striking example appeared after Reich's book was published, when a Japanese producer of office equipment, Brother, which manufactures here, accused a U.S. company, Smith-Corona, of dumping its made-in-Singapore typewriters in the U.S. market!

In formulating their proposals, both Reich and Kuttner obviously feel constrained by the fact that national economic policies can no longer be formulated entirely without reference to those of one's trading partners. High German interest rates make it difficult for America to lower *its* rates without at the same time weakening the dollar; European restrictions on Japanese imports divert Japanese products to more open U.S. markets; and economic mismanagement in Latin America threatens the viability of creditor-banks here.

But if this phenomenon of increasing interdependence is neatly described by both Reich and Kuttner, they both also go too far with it. Kuttner claims novelty for the fact that "America's industrial fate [is] partly the captive of other nations' industrial policies." Yet it was ever thus. In the 19th century Britain's policy of allowing free export of capital helped us to build our railroads; in the 1930's other nations' decisions to join us

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* Knopf, 304 pp., $22.95.
† Knopf, 331 pp., $24.00.

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in a mutually destructive tariff war contributed to the length and severity of the Great Depression. All economies were in the same convoy then. Now they are in the same boat.

As for Reich, he goes too far when he tells us that "there are no longer separate economies to be managed." Not so. Exports, although growing, still account for less than 7 percent of U.S. GNP. And we retain substantial ability to manage our own economic affairs. Just recently America cut its interest rates after Germany loudly announced that it would not follow suit—and the dollar did not collapse. The truth is that the linkages which economists like to think they know exist among deficits, interest rates, exchange rates, and other variables may not exist at all or, at most, may be so weak as to be dwarfed by purely domestic developments. To cite only the most obvious instances: perennial budget deficits have not destroyed the economy; trade deficits have not reduced the dollar to the condition of the ruble and other third-world currencies; low interest rates are supposed to stimulate investment in goods-producing plants; but since they also reduce the income consumers derive from their savings, they may instead reduce the need for new plants.

In short, the case that burgeoning world trade and internationalization rob a country as large, wealthy, and powerful as ours of the ability to fashion its own economic destiny is far from proven.

WHAT, then, really worries this liberal Democratic duo? As best one can determine from what are, in key places, murky statements, it seems to be that increased international competition makes it difficult to adopt high-cost social-welfare programs, and to levy the taxes to fund them.

Thus, Kuttner shrewdly recognizes that "the hallmark" of the postwar mixed economy was "a series of barriers, both overt and covert, to absolutely free flows of capital; things had tended to stay put—which enabled Center-Left parties to broker and defend social contracts that benefited their constituencies." This "political logic" was "all but obliterated" by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher who, by ending controls on capital flows, left high-cost welfare states and trade-union practices naked in the ensuing gale of international competition. So unless foreign goods can be locked out, and domestic capital locked in, the scope for expensive social-welfare programs will be sharply reduced in the U.S.

Kuttner therefore opts for "managed trade," sufficient constraints on a free trading system to allow U.S. policy-makers to set "industrial goals" and implement plans for selected industries. These, he feels, would put U.S. industrial policy back where it belongs—in the hands of domestic bureaucrats and politicians, rather than of international markets.

Reich, too, worries about international competition. Until now, economists always thought that specialization produced greater efficiency and wealth—more output from fewer units of input of labor and capital. Reich is careful not to deny this. But to him the important consequence of increased trade is that it helps to make our rich richer by making our poor poorer. Telephone assemblers in Singapore and data processors in Barbados and Ireland will work for less than their American counterparts, thereby drawing jobs away from America, and putting pressure on American workers to lower their asking prices. Only some few Americans can sell their talents in a global marketplace—at least at prices (wages) they find acceptable. Under such circumstances, we face this horror: "Some Americans may command much higher rewards; others, far lower."

Reich attributes this to the fact that the new internationalized world consists of three categories of work: routine production services ("repetitive tasks performed by the old foot soldiers of American capitalism"); in-person services (salespersons, taxi drivers, hairdressers); and symbolic-analytic services (problem-solving, strategic-brokering). It is the third group, made up of mostly "white males" and accounting for some 20 percent of the work force, that will grow richer in an internationally competitive world. To Reich this is unacceptable. For one thing, some of those in the symbolic-analytic service sector "can create substantial value for individual consumers, but these services do not necessarily improve society." They might, for example, discover "yet another extravagant use for fossil fuel or nonbiodegradable plastic," or design a nuclear power plant that could melt down and "poison the air."

Reich has a point here, even if his colorful examples do not help him to make it (nuclear power may be far more environmentally benign than other sources of energy). It is that markets malfunction when prices do not reflect the full social costs of production. A consumer of gasoline who does not pay the costs of the pollution he creates is underpaying, and therefore will consume too much fuel, while passing the costs of his pollution on to others. Reich is right in saying that it is the job of government to prevent such market failure by forcing producers to internalize these social costs, and consumers to bear that burden.

Here he differs from Kuttner. Both distrust markets, but Reich is willing to take a stab at improving their efficiency. He wants government to organize markets so that they work better. Kuttner would replace "laissez-faire," his carefully constructed straw man, with government intervention when a market system "does not efficiently or fairly distribute certain necessary social goods," and in order to produce "an efficient and just civil society." His genuflection in the direction of efficiency and his statement that he seeks a "practical middle ground" between pure socialism and

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pure laissez-faire notwithstanding, we have here the *cri de coeur* of an old-fashioned redistributionist, one less loath than Reich, I think, to substitute regulation for functioning markets.

To say that Reich has a bit more respect for markets than does Kuttner, however, is not to say that he is a candidate for president of the Adam Smith fan club. Reich, as we have seen, is far from satisfied with the inequality produced by markets, even well-functioning ones. To correct this alleged flaw, we need "good education, training, health care, and public infrastructure" available to "all Americans." This "will be costly." But since "most working Americans . . . cannot afford to shoulder the added financial burden of higher levels of public spending," other sources of funding infrastructure enhancement and income transfers will have to be found.

One place to which high-tax liberals have always looked is immobile resources. Real estate was at one time the most obvious such revenue source: it could not flee in the face of extortionate taxes. Alas for the public-sector enthusiasts, the factories sitting on that real estate could move to economically more congenial climes—and did. So, today, can facilities that house executives, computer programmers, and attendant shops. And, as politicians throughout the nation have discovered, homeowners may be relatively (although not totally) immobile, but they are politically potent, opposed to higher taxes on the houses they worked so hard to acquire. Therefore higher taxes on land are no longer feasible.

Where, then, is a liberal to turn for revenue? Why, to the rich, of course—or to Reich's "fortunate fifth," the symbolic analysts. The trouble, however, is that "the fortunate fifth," now operating on a global rather than a national scale, feels no responsibility to its less fortunate compatriots, and does not want to pay more taxes. These symbolic analysts are "quietly seceding from the large and diverse publics of America into homogeneous enclaves." Flush with cash, they have come to rely on private telecommunications systems, private jets, private golf and tennis clubs, and private day care, all of which reduces their interest in preserving the nation's cash-starved and crumbling infrastructure.

Why does the majority allow this, instead of rising up in its tax-raising wrath? Because of its "basic lack of understanding" of the tax code; its outmoded, "vestigial" feeling that the nation's economic health depends on "private profits"; its apathy, now that it no longer has strong trade unions to mobilize it; and its "profoundly American" assumption that "anyone can make it with enough hard work, guts, and gumption." The poor—besotted yet again with the false consciousness their champions are always attributing to them—do not want to fleece the rich because they are planning to be rich someday themselves.

Equally important, the top earners cannot be forced to pay more. Like capital, they are mobile. As New York City's Mayor David Dinkins has learned, his ability to tax his wealthy constituents is limited by their ability to move to the suburbs. And as New York's Governor Mario Cuomo points out, his ability to tax wealthy residents of the Empire State is limited by their ability to flee to Florida, Arizona, and other more hospitable jurisdictions. Kuttner, who also favors raising taxes on the rich, would correct this unfortunate detail with barriers to the flow of goods and capital.

This is a course of action Reich valiantly seeks to avoid because he fears what the brain drain taught Britain and the opening of borders taught Mikhail Gorbachev: the best and brightest see the world as their oyster, and will take themselves and/or their assets out of nations that do not permit them to realize their material ambitions. These people can, in Reich's words, "work almost anywhere there exist a telephone, fax, modem, and airport." They cannot, that is, be forced to pay higher taxes, even if the majority had the will to move against them.

Reich is right, of course. Although taxation at the levels preferred by him and Kuttner will not cause a mass emigration of symbolic analysts, it will have consequences. Some will go; others will stay, but develop overseas tax havens and tax-avoidance schemes; still others will work less hard (yes, there is a supply-side effect, even if it is not as great as the most ardent Reaganauts think).

Knowing this, Reich is reduced to a lame plea for an altruistic "positive economic nationalism," with everyone recognizing that "our mutual obligations as citizens extend beyond our economic usefulness to one another."

The failure of these two related efforts to construct a new platform on which liberals can stand is somewhat obscured by Kuttner's habit of erecting and then setting fire to straw men and by Reich's forensic skills. Indeed, Reich writes so well, carries the reader along so rapidly, that there is little occasion to pause, and wonder. His prose is the spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine he prescribes go down easily. Hence a few additional words of caution are in order.

Note, for example, Reich's value-laden description of the nation's top earners, the 20 percent of the work force he calls symbolic analysts. These brokers, lawyers, engineers, and bankers are the "fortunate fifth." Not the most able. Not the most productive. Merely the most fortunate. Who could object to taxing away their rising earnings? Similarly, most writers would refer to states in which the wealthy live; Reich refers to states "harboring"

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the wealthy, a term that can be accurate only if all property is theft.

Finally, there is Reich's use of data which, while not dishonest, is so entangled with his policy prescriptions as to require careful scrutiny. At one point, he bemoans the fact that spending on infrastructure "has declined steadily." Fair enough. But he goes on to tell the unwary that expenditure on public elementary and secondary education "has shown a similar pattern." Surely this means that such expenditure, like that on infrastructure, has declined. But read on. It seems that public spending on education "has increased since the mid-1970's, but not appreciably faster than it did during the previous fifteen-year period." A decline, then, is a failure to increase even more rapidly than in the past.

Kuttner, himself not a bad writer, relies more on selecting a pushover opponent: undiluted laissez-faire. This permits him to rail against "the ruthless accountability of markets" and "the inequity [of] . . . pure free-market economies." But every student knows that there never was a day in which government simply kept hands off the economic system. Certainly, neither Ronald Reagan nor Margaret Thatcher ever pretended to adopt such a completely passive role, either toward internal economic problems or toward international economic relations. Just as certainly, economists who contend that free markets do a better job than bureaucrats of allocating resources long ago accepted the concept of a social safety net for those unable to help themselves. But they sensibly argue that it should not be made so broad and attractive as to decouple reward from effort, and to sap the initiative that creates the wealth needed to pay for the safety net.

Furthermore, even the most ardent believers in free markets acknowledge that regulation is necessary where competition is absent or highly imperfect. But they see such regulation as a last resort, to be adopted only if antitrust policy—dismissed by Kuttner, who prefers the "well-behaved cartels" of Germany and Japan—fails to maintain competitive markets.

Understanding how difficult it is in these days of collapsing planned economies and growing capitalist ones to persuade readers of the beneficial effects of an expanded role for government, Kuttner grudgingly concedes that markets do some things quite well, and says that he opposes only "simple laissez-faire." But this ritual obeisance to markets means less than his calls for "global regulatory standards, so that market forces will not overwhelm those of civil society"; tax-law revisions to require pension funds to "behave as patient investors"; government investment "to help develop technologies and production processes for new domestic and export industries"; reregulation of airlines to eliminate "pure price competition"; and higher income taxes on those "with incomes in excess of $100,000."

STILL, Reich's prose and Kuttner's straw man are not the principal problems with these books. Where they really go astray is in relying on old and mostly discredited policies.

Thus, despite the inability of the finance ministers of the industrialized nations to agree on much beyond the menus for their periodic dinners, Kuttner would construct mechanisms to produce, by ministerial consensus, what markets now produce automatically. How this would happen, why national politicians would subordinate domestic political concerns to international goals, is left unexplained. And Kuttner would abandon trade policies that have contributed (as he himself recognizes) to an almost tenfold increase in the international flow of goods, and have provided American consumers with a cornucopia of foreign products.

For his part, Reich would beef up spending on education without first explaining why past increases have proved ineffective, and he would resist the trend toward privatization of services now woefully performed by government. The "pattern of secession" by the wealthy—the emergence of private swimming pools, private day care, private security services, and private roadways—is, he thinks, paid for with "dollars that under a more progressive tax code could have financed better public education" and other public services. But this flight from inefficient public services is, of course, nothing more than creeping capitalism, the development of private-sector competitors seeking to reverse decades of creeping socialism by offering better services at more reasonable prices.

After all, Federal Express does not prosper because its users want to secede from the body politic; it is successful because it offers better service than the incredibly inefficient and politicized postal service. The private Catholic schools are not oversubscribed because they spend more per pupil than the public schools. As it happens, they spend far less, largely because they do not have to fund the school-board bureaucrats or cope with the union chiefs who dominate public-sector education. And private security services—Reich's pet peeve—have not sprung up because we spend too little on public police forces, but because officers are inefficiently utilized and are restrained by the courts in their efforts to cope with crime in the streets.

Reading these works together shows the dilemma the Democrats face. Reich and Kuttner both want to increase the role of governments, public-sector spending, and taxes on the rich to pay for an ever-larger list of social programs. The ones Reich would expand or initiate include severance payments, relocation assistance, extra training grants, extra unemployment insurance, regional economic aid, funds for retooling or upgrading machinery, reduction of the third world's debt

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burden, pre- and postnatal care, child care and preschool preparation, excellent primary and secondary education, access to college regardless of financial condition, subsidies to firms undertaking high-value-added production, grants for research projects such as the high-energy particle accelerator, the human genome, and the exploration of space—and "good infrastructure."

But recent history surely teaches that such programs often fail to achieve their intended results, that governments are not very good economic managers, and that the public does not want to transfer any more income from itself to the government.

Americans are a generous people, and have always been willing to help the needy and to welcome newcomers to their shores. But they know when an expenditure is effective, and when it is counterproductive. No one argues, as Kuttner seems to charge, that if the market fails to provide a job for an illiterate, unwed, teenage mother, we should let her and her baby starve, or force her to "go on the game," in Dickensian fashion. What Americans have observed is that throwing more dollars into a welfare system which has spawned the unfortunate teenager seems less likely to solve the problem than a requirement that she acquire training which might liberate her from the cycle of dependency.

Kuttner, even more draconian than Reich, would bite the protectionist bullet, and manage trade and the economy in pursuit of a "civil society" and the elimination of "inequity." But the public rejected this proposition when it was put forward by Congressman Richard Gephardt in his run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988, and, protectionist pockets notwithstanding, Americans seem to prefer, for example, a free-trade agreement with Canada to detailed, managed trade.

THE upshot is that the Democratic strategists who have been directed to these books as a source of policy guidance will be disappointed. They can follow Reich, and end up with no money to fund their programs—barring a last-minute change of heart by the symbolic analysts—or they can follow Kuttner's protectionist prescriptions, and end up with an inefficient economy, managed by an international army of bureaucrats. Better still, they can read both but follow neither, relying instead on the only map that has proved reliable—the low-tax, incentive-based, market-oriented policies that produced the great Reagan boom of the 80's.

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Who Won Nicaragua?

Elliott Abrams

When on February 25, 1990, Violeta Chamorro was elected president of Nicaragua, it seemed that an end had finally come to the travail which had beset her country for the previous ten years.

It was in the late 1970's that a popular revolution against the Somoza dictatorship was hijacked at the last moment by the FSLN (*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*). Though the Sandinistas organized what appeared to be a coalition government, all power within it was concentrated in their hands; the non-Sandinistas—who included Violeta Chamorro herself, widow of a crusading newspaper editor murdered by Somoza—resigned one by one. During the 1980's the Marxist policies followed by the Sandinistas wrecked Nicaragua's economy. Real wages fell by perhaps 90 percent; a debt of over $10 billion was incurred; and the Soviet Union became the largest creditor of a country sunk in ever greater depths of penury.

Worse yet, with Marxism came a taste of Leninism: the Sandinistas transformed Nicaragua from a typically old-fashioned Latin autocracy into a police state, enlarging the security forces by roughly ten times the number Somoza had employed even at the height of the Sandinista rebellion against him. Opponents of the regime were jailed or, like the influential businessman Jorge Salazar, killed. Nicaraguans fled by the tens of thousands, establishing sizable colonies in the U.S., Honduras, and Costa Rica. Thousands of others joined the Nicaraguan resistance, or *contras*, to fight against the Sandinista regime.

But by 1990 it was all over—or so it seemed. Before the election, Nicaraguans had been too frightened to tell pollsters how they were planning to vote, in itself a measure of the oppression under which they lived. But the presence of thousands of foreign observers gave confidence that at least on election day the procedures would be fair, and the ballot secret, and so they were. The Sandinistas' crushing defeat, after a campaign heavily weighted in their favor by state resources and pressure against Mrs. Chamorro's fourteen-party coalition, was certified by none other than Jimmy Carter, whose unwillingness as President of the U.S. to act when a power vacuum developed in 1979 had had much to do with the Sandinistas' ability to seize power in the first place.

Mrs. Chamorro's decisive victory offered hope that the new government would be a strong one. It was very clear that she enjoyed ardent public backing. Moreover, she would have access to economic aid from Washington, the European Community, and Japan. Finally, with the Sandinistas out, the *contra* war would end. In short, Nicaragua seemed poised for democracy, peace, and a measure of economic recovery.

Now Mrs. Chamorro's government has been in power for over a year, and the sad fact is that, although her personal popularity still remains high, the overall record of her government has been dismal. On the economic side, despite over $541 million in pledges of economic aid from the United States, of which over $200 million has already been delivered, the government has been unable to get production restarted, and the GDP fell by more than 4 percent in 1990. Until recently inflation was hard to calculate because it reached stratospheric rates—according to U.S. government estimates, 13,500 percent in 1990 (it is moderating in 1991). The exchange rate early this year was 25 *million* "old" cordobas to one dollar. And on the political side the record is even more dismal. Mrs. Chamorro's coalition has fallen apart, and her ability to govern has been systematically destroyed by the very people she defeated at the polls—the Sandinistas. How have the hopes of 1990 been so quickly dashed?

Mrs. Chamorro's election victory was accepted by the stunned Sandinistas, and for this apparent conversion from Leninism to democracy they were much lauded by the likes of President Carter and Senator Christopher Dodd. But the conversion to democracy was an illusion: within days, the Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega announced that his party would continue to "rule from below."

The first overt challenge to the elected government came in May 1990, in the form of a week-long strike by Sandinista-led government employees' unions against Mrs. Chamorro's economic reform plan. This plan was a familiar and quite orthodox effort to spur production, reduce the size of the government deficit, and cut the government

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payroll. But cutting the payroll threatened the favored position of Sandinista party loyalists who had been placed in government jobs, and in this way threatened half the power base of the FSLN, the other half being the military.

Mrs. Chamorro had two options: give in to the strike, or resist it. To resist would have meant trying to organize "people power" (a term deriving from the massive demonstrations of support mustered by the Aquino forces in the Philippines), and there is no doubt that she would have succeeded in turning out hundreds of thousands of her compatriots for this purpose. After all, the taste of electoral victory was still strong in their mouths, as was the new sense of security against Sandinista threats. But Mrs. Chamorro did not do this; instead, she awarded the strikers the big raises they demanded. Another strike in July 1990, this one accompanied by violence, produced an even worse result: the government conceded to the Sandinistas a role in making economic policy.

These were hardly the only cases of government capitulation to Sandinista aggression. It turned out, for example, that the Sandinista elite had engaged in wholesale theft in the period between the election and Mrs. Chamorro's inauguration. They helped themselves to vast amounts of government property, including houses and cars; to this day many live in mansions they seized years ago and to which they "legally" took title just before leaving office last year. The Chamorro government has not acted seriously to reverse these thefts, or to recover money paid out to Sandinista officials during their final weeks in power.

Similarly, Mrs. Chamorro's government has displayed exceptional weakness in facing up to Sandinista control of the military. The earliest example was the decision, announced right after inauguration, to allow Humberto Ortega (Daniel's brother) to stay on as head of the army. This decision was part of a secret agreement struck between Ortega and Antonio Lacayo, the most powerful minister in Mrs. Chamorro's government, before the inauguration, and kept secret both from the public and from the other parties which were at least theoretically Mrs. Chamorro's allies in the winning coalition. Although Mrs. Chamorro herself assumed the portfolio of the defense ministry, this only underscored the significance of the secret deal with Ortega, for according to its terms she agreed to shift all the important powers from the defense ministry to the army.

Humberto Ortega thus became the most powerful man in Nicaragua, and though Mrs. Chamorro had initially indicated that he would only be military commander for six months, in March 1991 Lacayo confirmed that he would remain in this post "indefinitely."

THERE is more. Instead of demanding that the dreaded Sandinista secret police be disbanded, Mrs. Chamorro permitted its work to be shifted to the army. And incredibly, with the functions and the personnel went the infamous Lenin Cerna, once and now again the secret-police chief in Nicaragua. The current head of the prison system is Marcos Arevalo, whose record as a Sandinista *comandante* earned him the nickname *"El Carnicero"*—the butcher. Thus the entire Sandinista security *apparat* remains intact. As for the Sandinista army, still under party control, it still numbers 28,000 in a bankrupt country with no enemies and no security threats.

One thing the Sandinistas are doing with their power is aiding the Marxist FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador. In 1990 the Sandinista high command denied any responsibility for the transfer of ground-to-air missiles from Nicaragua to the FMLN, but the discovery in Honduras this March of a truck full of munitions bound to the same destination indicates otherwise. Support for the Salvadoran guerrillas remains Sandinista policy, and apparently no one in the elected Nicaraguan government is in a position to stop it.

What about human rights? While the situation has in some ways improved enormously—for example, there is full freedom of the press and of religion—dozens of former *contras* have mysteriously turned up dead. Anti-government demonstrations last fall were also crushed by Sandinista policemen using not only tear gas but bullets. Further, Dr. Aristides Sanchez, a former leader of the resistance forces and a man from one of Nicaragua's most distinguished families, was arrested in November and jailed in Managua's maximum-security prison on the blatantly trumped-up charge of storing weapons in his home. Upon his release, he was taken straight to the airport and deported. The Nicaraguan Association for Human Rights, a group that opposed the Somozas and Sandinistas with equal courage, commented that this was "the forced exile of . . . the first political prisoner of the government of Mrs. Chamorro."

And then on February 16 of this year came the murder of Enrique Bermudez, the former commander of the *contras*, outside the Intercontinental Hotel in the center of Managua. There can hardly be a person in Nicaragua who doubts the Sandinistas' involvement in that crime. The reasoning is simple. With the economy collapsing, and the government appearing weaker and increasingly isolated from its early supporters, Bermudez was a possible rallying point of former *contras* and other peasant resisters. Such, precisely, was Bermudez's purpose when he returned to Nicaragua late last year. His murder would thus send a message to anyone thinking of challenging Sandinista power.

The reaction of Mrs. Chamorro's government to the Bermudez murder was pathetic—especially when compared with the response of the government of El Salvador to the murder of six Jesuits in that country in 1990. Then, an angry President Cristiani asked for and received the help of the FBI, Scotland Yard, and the Spanish police to investigate the crime—and not incidentally to keep his own police honest. He knew he could not credibly rely on those who might have been

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the perpetrators of the crime to solve it. Yet this is precisely what Mrs. Chamorro has done: the investigation of the Bermudez murder is in the hands of the Sandinista police.

Belatedly, Mrs. Chamorro did appoint a sort of oversight commission in the Bermudez case which includes a representative of the Catholic Church and of the *contras*, but it has no foreigners and no one with the capability to make independent technical judgments. In March, Bermudez's widow wrote to Mrs. Chamorro, politely suggesting that the commission's charge, which was to work together with the Sandinista police, would necessarily limit its ability to find out who killed her husband. In April, just before Mrs. Chamorro's visit to Washington, her commission agreed, and unanimously urged the government to call for foreign help, noting that the Sandinista police "investigation" had yet to find the bullet that killed Bermudez, determine where it entered his body, or identify any suspects. Thus far, Mrs. Chamorro has not accepted the commission's recommendation.

In short, Mrs. Chamorro is treating the murder of Enrique Bermudez as she did the Sandinista strikes and the arms shipments to the FMLN.

How can one explain the behavior of Violeta Chamorro's government? First, Mrs. Chamorro reigns; she does not rule. It was fashionable a year ago to complain that the "widows," Mrs. Chamorro and Cory Aquino of the Philippines, were governing too weakly; today it would seem unfair to link these two, for Mrs. Aquino's personal involvement in decision-making is much greater, and her willingness to take on opponents much stronger. Mrs. Chamorro does not seem to make, or even to be much involved in, the key economic or political decisions in Nicaragua, which means that at the very center of her government there is a vacuum. No one but she has the stature and legitimacy to stand up to the Sandinistas, but she refuses to do it. So it may be more accurate to say that she had the opportunity to rule, but abdicated.

Second, it would have made sense for Mrs. Chamorro, as the leader of a diverse electoral coalition, to assign tasks to members of the parties and groups supporting her; this would have had the additional benefit of strengthening that support. Instead, the coalition parties have been ignored by the government; the vice president, Virgilio Godoy, was not even given an office to work in. Mrs. Chamorro relies on a small coterie centered around Antonio Lacayo, her son-in-law, and his brother-in-law, Alfredo Cesar. (Lacayo is now minister of the presidency, and Cesar is head of the National Assembly.) Both are very smart, very ambitious, very elegant. Both are democrats of deep conviction, but they also seem to have at least one other conviction that is equally deep: namely, that they and their class were meant to rule.

Indeed, few aspects of the Chamorro government have been more striking than its social and class configuration. Mrs. Chamorro would not be president had it not been for the sacrifices of tens of thousands of Nicaraguan peasants, some in the *contra* forces, some relatives of *contras*, some with no *contra* connection. The very wide support the *contras* won among the peasantry has by now been acknowledged even by the Sandinistas. (Luis Carrion Cruz, long a powerful member of the Sandinista National Directorate, has said, for example, that "In the end, the *contra* was a *campesino* [peasant] movement with its own leaders. . . . Really the [Sandinista] Revolution was eminently urban.") Yet while Mrs. Chamorro's government has been quick to compromise with Sandinista strikers on the public payroll in Managua, the benefits that have accrued to the *campesinos* from her government are hard to discern. The rural standard of living fell during Sandinista rule, and it is still falling. The promises made to the *contras* at the time they gave up their arms, promises above all of land, and of freedom from Sandinista persecution, have been honored more in the breach than in the observance.

This is a government of the urban, well-to-do, white, American-educated elite, the same elite that ruled before the Somozas and whose political incompetence helped open the door to the Somozas. Now it is back, and its presence helps explain why the current government is more at ease making deals with well-educated Sandinistas—themselves the children of the urban middle class—than organizing poor, illiterate peasants. In a sense, the Chamorro victory was an exercise in reallocating power within a single urban elite.

Mrs. Chamorro has been described as a kind of mother figure, trying to heal the wounds that divide her society even as she tries to heal those that split her own family: of her four children, two are active and ardent Sandinistas, and two are equally vigorous anti-Sandinistas. The image is a powerful one, much played upon in Mrs. Chamorro's presidential campaign, but it deserves a careful look. For Mrs. Chamorro has no *campesinos* in her family.

All this illuminates the third main weakness of her government, its defeatism. The examples of it noted above are but the tip of the iceberg. The overall strategy Mrs. Chamorro's advisers apparently adopted *before the election* was to compromise with the Sandinistas rather than challenge them, believing themselves too weak to risk a confrontation. The size of Mrs. Chamorro's victory apparently left those advisers unmoved. Yet one need not be a political sage to realize that a government that defines itself as weak, will be.

It has sometimes puzzled observers why the government is so terribly reluctant to risk a confrontation. The desire to avoid violence cannot be a full explanation; there is no way of knowing that the Sandinistas, had they been confronted early on by a firm and extremely popular president, would have turned to violence. The truth is that Mrs. Chamorro's government has only two choices. It can rule *with* the Sandinistas, and

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ignore the masses of peasants; or it can struggle against the Sandinistas by organizing and truly empowering those peasants. This latter course it has steadfastly refused even to consider. Mrs. Chamorro's advisers thus closed off the possibility of her displacing Sandinista power with her own, and accepted the need for what would be at best a form of co-government.

This neglect of the *campesinos* has opened a window of opportunity for the Sandinistas, who have recognized the strategic error they made by alienating rural Nicaraguans after their 1979 seizure of power. Their advantage lies in the fact that they recognize Mrs. Chamorro is committing the same error today, although she and her advisers seem blithely unaware of it. Yet so deep is the hatred of the Sandinistas in rural Nicaragua that it will remain very difficult for them to win *campesino* support no matter how clever their next campaign.

Opinion polls show that a very strong majority of Nicaraguans, including *campesinos*, still approve of Mrs. Chamorro's government—both because of her exceptional personal appeal, and because they credit her with ending the war and replacing the Sandinistas. After her term in office, no anti-Sandinista candidate will have her personal popularity, and none will be credited with having brought the Sandinista period of war and oppression to an end. Nicaragua's political future will thus hinge on whether the anti-Sandinista majority can unite and elect a government that truly represents the country—or whether, as now, a small group of civilian officials will go on making deals with the Sandinistas behind the façades of their government offices. Without Mrs. Chamorro's political magic, democracy in Nicaragua may once again be threatened by Sandinista power and the weakness and divisions among those resisting it.

WHAT does this mean for U.S. policy? For many Americans who had always opposed aid to the *contras*, Mrs. Chamorro's February 1990 victory provided proof that the *contra* option had been wrong all along: democracy, it seemed, could come to Nicaragua without war. *Contra* supporters, on the other hand, believed that her victory was largely *owed* to the military efforts of the peasant troops who had kept the option of democracy open by preventing a total consolidation of Sandinista power. But even many of these supporters now agreed that whatever the *contras*' earlier contributions, the electoral outcome of February 1990 was the best possible result. An elected government would be stronger, and more adept at handling the Sandinistas, than any *contra* government imposed by force of arms could have been.

Today that conclusion is harder and harder to defend. Had the United States continued to help the *contras* instead of suspending aid in early 1988, the impressive military gains they were then making would have continued. One possible outcome would have been a negotiated settlement on better terms than were ultimately accepted. Such a settlement, instead of disbanding the *contras* while Sandinista forces remained intact, would have disarmed both sides simultaneously, and thereby prevented the Sandinistas from regaining an absolute monopoly on force within the country. A second possible outcome would have been that the *contras* would win sufficient military victories to spur a kind of insurrection against Sandinista rule. In either event, the current government would have had more power and the Sandinistas less.

Perhaps more to the point, had the *contras* "won," for the first time in Nicaraguan history power would have begun to shift from the urban elites to the rural masses. This would have brought to Nicaragua a kind of democratization going far beyond the formal processes observed on election day, as well as the sort of profound social and political revolution that American policy aimed at.

This is a lesson that is resisted in today's Washington. During Mrs. Chamorro's state visit in April she asked for "steadfast financial assistance from the United States throughout this entire decade." President Bush declined to make a commitment quite that large, but indicated that the U.S. would try to secure more help from the World Bank, and from other potential donors like Japan or the Europeans. "One way or another, together we will do it," the President told her. And indeed, an additional American grant of $75 million and a series of Latin, European, and Japanese loans pledged in May will enable Nicaragua to clear its debts to the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and begin receiving additional loans from them in 1992. It seems, then, that foreign money will pay for the "conciliation" with the Sandinistas. With a little help from her friends overseas, Mrs. Chamorro will be able to avoid a test of power for a while longer, and perhaps even until her term is over.

Her determination to avoid such a test reveals the truth of the assessment offered last September by that true hero of modern Nicaragua, Cardinal Obando y Bravo: "Right now, the FSLN is running the country." The Sandinista gamble in allowing a free election to go forward has paid off. The formal democratic structure introduced by the 1990 election has become not a guarantee of popular rule, but a protective shield for the Sandinistas. They make the decisions that are important to them, and leave the rest to the government.

In Washington, the fierce debates of the 80's over Nicaragua are gone from Capitol Hill. But the Sandinistas are not gone from Managua, where they still wield power, and where that power still comes from the barrel of a gun. This is not what voters sought when they bravely went to the polls to vote, and not what they thought they had won, but it is what they have got.

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George Eliot's Rabbi

Edward Alexander

In 1848 a twenty-nine-year-old Englishwoman named Mary Ann Evans, infuriated by the idea of "race fellowship" among Jews, which she thought she detected in Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Coningsby*, told a friend that she was

> almost ready to echo Voltaire's vituperation. I bow to the supremacy of Hebrew poetry, but much of their early mythology and almost all their history, is utterly revolting. Their stock has produced a Moses and a Jesus but Moses was impregnated with Egyptian philosophy, and Jesus is venerated and adored by us only for that wherein he transcended or resisted Judaism. . . . Everything specifically Jewish is of a low grade.

This being so, Mary Ann Evans could even ruminate about how "Extermination . . . seems to be the law for inferior races," including "even the Hebrew caucasian."

Exactly one hundred years later, when the state of Israel was established, each of its three cities—Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa—had a street named after George Eliot, the pseudonym by which Mary Ann Evans had later become famous as a novelist, and under which she had come to express a view of the Jewish people that was the very antithesis of "Voltaire's vituperation."

In 19th-century England, Mary Ann Evans's originally disparaging and spiteful view of Jewish civilization and Jews was hardly unusual. The historian and statesman Thomas Babington Macaulay, in his April 1830 address to the House of Commons on the second reading of the (unsuccessful) bill for the Removal of Jewish Disabilities, reminded those of his colleagues who disputed the Jews' legal right to political participation that "three hundred years ago they had no legal right to the teeth in their heads." Parliamentarians who found Macaulay's allusion too cryptic could have been enlightened by the political philosopher Thomas Carlyle. He was reported by his friend J.A. Froude to have remarked, while standing in front of Rothschild's house at Hyde Park corner:

> I do not mean that I want King John back again, but if you ask me which mode of treating these people to have been the nearest to the will of the Almighty about them—to build them palaces like that, or to take the pincers to them, I declare for the pincers.

Then, says Froude, Carlyle imagined himself to *be* King John, with Rothschild on the bench before him:

> Now, Sir, the State requires some of these millions you have heaped together with your financing work. "You won't? Very well"—and the speaker gave a twist with his wrist—"Now will you?"—and then another twist, till the millions were yielded.

In 1833, the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who usually prided himself on the ability to reconcile apparently discordant qualities, could find no relation between the Jew of the Hebrew Bible and the Jew of modern England:

> The two images farthest removed from each other which can be comprehended under one term, are, I think, Isaiah—"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!"—and Levi of Holywell Street—"Old Clothes"—both of them Jews, you'll observe.

Coleridge was the spiritual father of the Liberal or Broad Church movement, led in early Victorian England by Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby. In Arnold's view, Jews had no right to full citizenship or to the privileges attendant upon it, such as entry to the universities. England, he argued, was the land of Englishmen, not of "lodgers" who had claims to nothing more than honorary citizenship. "'Religion,' in the king's mouth," Arnold insisted, "can mean only Christianity." He was infuriated by the notion of a Jew serving as one of the governors of the Christ's Hospital School, and in 1838 resigned his position on London University's board of examiners rather than countenance the admission of Jews to a university whose "nonsectarianism" had, ironically, been a scandal to High Church writers like John Henry Newman (later to become a Roman Catholic cardinal).

In that very year Charles Dickens completed publication of *Oliver Twist*, in which the atavistic potentialities of the debate on the Jewish question were fully realized. Carlyle might hark back to the days of King John, but Dickens, in the figure

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of Fagin, dredged up—in the midst of a "modern" novel, replete with knowing sociological allusions to slums and criminals' habits and jargon—nearly every anti-Semitic nightmare of Christendom: "the Jew" (this with hammering insistence) as Satanic reptile, Judas, Christ-killer, thief, corrupter of children, sexual pervert. (About the only thing Dickens left out of his portrait was the belief, widely and tenaciously held by Christian theologians into the 17th century, that Jewish males menstruated.) That Dickens could do this without, apparently, harboring any malicious intention toward Jews shows the depth of subterranean feeling that might lurk beneath debates in parliament or the universities over the place of real, living Jews in modern society.

Some even expressed doubts as to whether these Jews were truly alive, or merely akin to the fossils of which Victorian geologists were writing. Newman was fond of quoting the complacent declaration of the Church Father Origen that "in the fullness of time, Judaism came to naught"; and he wrote a poem called "Judaism" to express his view that the Jews, even if physically alive, were spiritually dead: "O Piteous race! Fearful to look upon,/Once standing in high place, Heaven's eldest son/O aged blind Unvenerable." In *Loss and Gain*, his autobiographical novel of 1848, Newman heaped scorn on Jews who aspired to rebuild Jerusalem as a cabal of mercenary and ridiculous speculators.

Matthew Arnold, the disciple both of Newman and of Newman's old rival in the Church of England, his father Thomas Arnold, had a richer appreciation both of Jewish history and Jewish theology than either of his masters. He placed a high value upon the religious experience of the people Israel as the unique source of righteousness, but deplored their "insignificance in everything else—this petty, unsuccessful, unamiable people, without politics, without science, without art, without charm."

GRADUALLY, in the course of the Victorian period, English Jews achieved a level of legal tolerance, emancipation, and integration that far exceeded what their cousins on the continent had. But the imperious, condescending view of Jewish culture, the haughty contempt for what Carlyle called "Hebrew old clothes" and for the inner, spiritual life of Jews, continued to infect the "instructed" classes. How, then, did Mary Ann Evans, almost alone among her contemporaries, surmount it?

Although her essays for the *Westminster Review* that touch on religion, and especially on the preachers of her own family's evangelical persuasion, had been acrid in their irony, she no sooner began to write fiction (her first such work, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, appeared in 1857) than she ceased to speak contemptuously of any religious faith. In 1859 she wrote:

> I have no longer any antagonism toward any faith in which human sorrow and human longing for purity have expressed themselves. . . . Many things that I should have argued against ten years ago, I now feel myself too ignorant, and too limited in moral sensibility, to speak of with confident disapprobation.

Not the least important of these things was the Jews. In 1858 she and her beloved G.H. Lewes, traveling in Europe, found that "the most interesting things" in Prague were the Jewish burial ground (*Alter Friedhof*) and the old (*Altneu*) synagogue. The multitude of quaint tombs in the cemetery struck her as the existential realization of Jewish history, "the fragments of a great building . . . shaken by an earthquake." But ruins were not the whole story:

> We saw a lovely dark-eyed Jewish child here, which we were glad to kiss in all its dirt. Then came the somber old synagogue, with its smoked groins, and lamp forever burning. An intelligent Jew was our *cicerone*, and read us some Hebrew out of the precious old book of the law.*

But the real turning point in George Eliot's attitude toward "everything specifically Jewish" came in 1866, when she met Emanuel Deutsch. Her evangelical background and her translations of D.F. Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* ("The Life of Jesus") and Spinoza's *Ethics* had inevitably involved her in Jewish history and thought, yet had done little to dislodge her from the view that "to say 'Jewish philosopher' seems almost like saying a round square." Deutsch, profoundly immersed in the most "specifically Jewish" thing in the world, the Talmud, was a revelation to her.

Born at Neisse in Prussian Silesia in 1829, Deutsch studied at the gymnasium for two years, but then came under the tutelage of an uncle in Mislowitz who was a rabbi and a talmudic scholar. After becoming bar-mitzvah, he resumed his gymnasium studies, and then proceeded to the University of Berlin, where he devoted himself chiefly to theology while continuing his talmudic studies. He was a living embodiment of Matthew Arnold's ideal union of Hebraism and Hellenism. "As I grew up," Deutsch recalled in a memoir of 1872,

> Homer and Virgil stood side by side on my boyish bookshelf with the Mishnah and the Midrash. . . . Before I was inured in the Akademe of Plato and his friends, it was deemed well to steep my soul for a time absolutely in that ocean called the Talmud . . . and . . . I learnt to contrast the fierce lightnings that shook the rafters of Sura and Pumbeditha with the mild, serene, ironically smiling lips of Socrates.

In Berlin, Deutsch mastered the English lan-

* She repeated this description of the synagogue, with slight variation, in her short story, "The Lifted Veil."

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guage and its literature; and in 1855 he moved to England and became an assistant in the library department of the British Museum. Over the next eighteen years, he published hundreds of articles on a large variety of Oriental and Semitic subjects, ranging from the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Moabite Stone to Islam and Judeo-Arabic metaphysics. His ultimate ambition, however, was to produce a treatise on the Talmud.

In October 1867 Deutsch leaped into fame with a lengthy general article on the Talmud in the *Quarterly Review*. Since it recounted the Talmud's history of persecution and censorship in Christendom, it was widely attacked. But, perhaps because of its sweet-tempered insistence on the brotherhood of Judaism and Christianity in late antiquity, it was also generously celebrated. The British Museum was pestered with inquiries about Deutsch; the Viceroy of Egypt invited him to the opening of the Suez Canal; flattering invitations reached him to visit America and deliver lectures; one of the Royal Princesses was delighted to secure the first manuscript page of the article; Matthew Arnold proudly reported to his good friend Lady de Rothschild that "I met Mr. Deutsch the other day, and had a long talk with him about Hebraism and Hellenism." He was even invited to dine with the Prime Minister.

But all the acclaim led, so it seemed, to nothing. Some of the very people who heaped praise upon Deutsch for an essay that carefully explained the true nature of the Sabbath, of the Pharisees, of the talmudic subversion of the *lex talionis*, of the abundant mercifulness of the God of Jonah, could speak of the Jewish Sabbath as a day of grim austerity emulated by English Puritanism, of the Pharisees as a sect of literalist, narrow-minded hypocrites, of "the Jewish belief in an eye for an eye," and of the "Jewish God" as a vengeful tyrant superseded by the Christian God of Love. Matthew Arnold may have truly enjoyed talking with Deutsch about his Talmud article in August 1868, but the joy did not keep him, just a few weeks later, from writing disparagingly of all post-biblical Jewish existence in his preface to *Culture and Anarchy*.

Most galling to Deutsch was the refusal of the British Museum itself to grant institutional recognition to his labors by forming a Semitic department. A document signed by the Dean of Westminster, Lord Strangford, Lane Layard, George Rawlinson, and other prominent men of learning, petitioning parliament to establish a post for Deutsch as keeper of Semitic antiquities at the British Museum, was quietly shelved.

Yet Deutsch's labors did have one lasting effect, and that was on George Eliot's writing about Jews and Zionism. Indeed, it was she who urged him to ignore both the attacks and celebrations provoked by what she called his "glorious article." Work steadily, she advises him in December 1867, "without reference to any temporary chit-chat . . . the noise of admiration is always half of it contemptible in its quality . . . and the spite, the head-shaking, the depreciation . . . are the muddier reflux of muddy waters." For this sage counsel, Deutsch reciprocated with weekly Hebrew lessons for the gloomy sibyl of English fiction.

Deutsch's knowledge of Amharic and its cognate languages brought an invitation to accompany the British Army to Abyssinia, where, it was thought, valuable manuscripts and other antiquities might be discovered. He declined the proposal, but it made him think seriously enough about travel in the East to respond with alacrity to a British Museum commission that would enable him to visit the Holy Land in spring 1869. "The East: all my wild yearnings fulfilled at last!" A friend described how Deutsch "was himself astonished at the emotion that choked him when he found himself among his own people at the Wailing place in Jerusalem, and he could seldom speak of it without tears." At the Royal Institution in Albermarle Street on May 29, 1869, he began by speaking of the past, of "the touching sight of the faces, with their thousand years of woe written in them, that lean against the Wailing place on the walls of Jerusalem." But he concluded by speaking of the future, insisting that the destiny of "the once proscribed and detested Jews . . . is not yet fulfilled."

Within days of his return, Eliot and Lewes were eager to hear for themselves of his reactions to Palestine. "Thrice welcome! Keep next Sunday for us. . . . We shall not be satisfied with a small allowance of talk." In fact, since Deutsch now began to dine with the Leweses once a week, they received a very ample allowance, whose contents we can best construe in the character of Mordecai in Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda*.

Not long after his return from Palestine, Deutsch began to suffer terribly from the cancer that would kill him in 1873 after three years which, in the words of a friend, "consisted of nothing but a series of medical and surgical appliances, some of inconceivable horror." Eliot, guided by her profound sense that it is not the utilitarian pursuit of happiness but the idea of a community of suffering that provides the basis of ethical doctrine, felt personally called to keep Deutsch from suicide during these years. Speaking to him as "a fellow Houyhnhnm who is bearing the yoke with you," she tells her "dear Rabbi" that "I have been ailing and in the Slough of Despond too," and even intimates that she herself might once in her life have contemplated self-destruction: "Remember, it has happened to many to be glad they did not commit suicide, though they once ran for the final leap. . . ."

Deutsch did not put an end to himself; but neither did he live to know real joy or satisfaction:

I have certain words in my possession which

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have been given me that they might be said to others, few or many. . . . I know also that I shall not find peace or rest until I have said my whole say, and yet I cannot do it. . . . For a long time now I have been frozen in every way. . . . As I work on with my metaphysical Talmud-developments, and see how wasted all that grace, and keenness, and catholicity of the minority has been on the majority . . . I feel what many a braver, stouter heart has felt: the futility of sacrifice.

As he declined rapidly from cancer, his friends collected money to fulfill his desire for a second trip to the Holy Land. But by the time he reached Egypt, he sensed that "all this is the last flicker!" On his deathbed, Deutsch was overwhelmed by the tragic irony of his life: "A whole flood of thoughts old and new . . . storm in upon me with every breath." Yet the tomb-world of Egypt reminded him that no man, and he least of all, can stop the decay of his body. He died in Alexandria on May 12, 1873, and was buried in the city's Jewish cemetery.

GEORGE ELIOT heard the news as she was planning *Daniel Deronda*. She, who had urged Deutsch to view his work under the aspect of eternity, now took upon herself the obligation to prolong his existence in the Jewish, more specifically Zionist, ambience of the novel. Her friend George Grove, the musicologist and founder of the Palestine Exploration Fund, thought he saw Deutsch in the figure of Mirah: "You must have thought of our dear Deutsch when you conceived her character. . . . My memory welled up." But it is far more likely that Eliot endowed Deutsch with a life beyond life in the fictional character of Mirah's brother, Mordecai,

a man steeped in poverty and obscurity, weakened by disease, consciously within the shadow of advancing death, but living an intense life in an invisible past and future, careless of his personal lot, except for its possibly making some obstruction to a conceived good which he never shared except as a brief inward vision.

Eliot's identification with Deutsch was intensified by the hostile reaction of Victorian intellectual circles to precisely those parts of *Deronda* that reflected his influence. She wrote to the American novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe:

As to the Jewish element in *Deronda*, I expected from first to last in writing it that it would create much stronger resistance and even repulsion than it has actually met with. But precisely because I felt that the usual attitude of Christians toward Jews is—I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid when viewed in the light of their professed principles, I therefore felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to. . . . Can anything be more disgusting than to hear people called "educated" making small jokes about eating ham, and showing themselves empty of any real knowledge as to the relation of their own social and religious life to the history of the people they think themselves witty in insulting? . . . I find men educated at Rugby supposing that Christ spoke Greek. To my feeling, this deadness to the history which has prepared half our world for us . . . lies very close to the worst kind of irreligion. . . . It is a sign of the intellectual narrowness—in plain English, the stupidity, which is still the average mark of our culture.

Ultimately, however, it was Deutsch's hope and not his despair that was transmitted to the future by Eliot. We see its reflection in *Daniel Deronda* and in "The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!," a contentious essay against English liberals keen to promote every nationalism except the Jewish one. Eager to celebrate the dignity of populations of which they have never seen a single specimen, English liberals, she alleges, "sneer at the notion of a renovated national dignity for the Jews," and impatiently desire (just as Mary Ann Evans once did) the "complete fusion" of the Jews with the people among whom they are dispersed. Deutsch's hope found more private expression in Eliot's notebooks, filled not only with her laborious notes on such grammatical technicalities as *piel* and *pual, hiphil* and *huphal* that she took after each Hebrew lesson with Deutsch, but with such visionary musings as the following: "Mother singing Hebrew prayers & texts over her sleeping infant. How a language may sleep, & wake again!"

The most illustrious reawakener of that "sleeping" language, Eliezer ben-Yehuda, the Lithuanian-born father of modern colloquial Hebrew, describes in his autobiographical memoirs how his "mad" dream of Jewish national revival made him a pariah among his fellow university students in late-19th-century Russia:

But one day [in 1878] one of them told me of a character in an English novel, who had the very same dream. After I read the novel, *Daniel Deronda*, in a Russian translation, several times [!], I decided to leave the University of Dynaburg for Paris, where I would learn all that was necessary for my work in Eretz Yisrael.

Deutsch had concluded his essay on the Talmud with a little anthology of its most telling proverbs, culminating with an adage that "solemnly, as a warning and as a comfort . . . strikes on our ear: 'And it is not incumbent upon thee to complete the work.'" Dying in Egypt and, like many another Victorian, beckoning toward a promised land that it would not be his to enter, Deutsch would have been justified in finding comfort in that talmudic consolation; one hopes that he did.

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The Threshold of This World

A Story

Kelly Cherry

After my father had been dead for about nine months, he began to appear in the kitchen. I'm referring to the kitchen in England, where my parents had chosen to live in their retirement. They were musicians, and what they wanted to do with their retirement was listen to music, and England is a place for that. They bought a small red-brick house in a village outside Reading, within commuting distance of London. After six months in quarantine, their dog was allowed to join them. They had been careful to buy a house with a fenced-in back yard, the fence hidden by a hedge ten feet tall. A munificent oak held court at the far end of the property, scattering a largesse of acorns for those squirrels willing to brave the dog.

The day came, of course, when the dog could no longer chase the squirrels and my parents could no longer make the long trip to London. My parents now watched telly most of the day; at nine o'clock at night, they moved to the kitchen for ice cream. My father scooped up three dishes, setting one on the floor for the dog. The three of them were crowded into a kitchen barely big enough to hold the appliances. The furnace was in there too, inside a cabinet, warm as a hand, so that being in the kitchen felt like being held in somebody's palm. Whenever I visited them, I ate the mandatory bowl of ice cream and had that feeling of being held, being clasped and enclosed.

When the dog died, and my father no longer felt needed, sadness took over the house. Such sadness is not unlike what the English call "rising damp," a pervasive mold in rainy climates. My father declined rapidly. He was diagnosed as having Alzheimer's, and within a year, he was dead of a stroke. My mother weighed 78 pounds and had lost the use of one of her legs. She had end-stage emphysema. She could no longer manage the stairs. On my last visit there, which I had made wanting to see my father while he could still recognize me, I had gotten them a replacement for Blaze, the dog that had died. Oscar was a Shih Tzu who'd been born with a hernia that rendered him ineligible for breeding and who, at six months, was just a bit too old for consignment to a pet shop. Now he and my mother slept together on a single bed that had been set up downstairs in the dining room, next to the kitchen. When my mother wrote to me that she had seen my father sitting in his chair in the kitchen, I wondered if her mind was going too, and perhaps it wasn't even Alzheimer's—I knew from experience that losing someone you love can sensitize you to every memory of him, so that his memory is as present to you as he used to be. It would surely not be difficult to confuse the presence of the memory with the man himself. "Dear Nina," my mother wrote back when I suggested this, "don't be a dope. I do not have a sentimental bone in my body, and if your father is not in the kitchen, who the hell is sitting in there scarfing ice cream every night?"

I was, myself, when I read this letter, ensconced in my Green Bay Packers chair—a club chair I'd bought years ago, that had a Green Bay Packers emblem on it; the department store was eager to unload it because even in Wisconsin nobody had been a Green Bay Packers fan since the days of Vince Lombardi—with my own little dog curled up beside me. My daughter, Tavy, was rocking in her rocking chair in front of the radio. Madison, which is so relentlessly populist that it feels that every musical faction, like every political faction, must be served even if it means that everybody winds up feeling shortchanged, refused to have an all-day classical station, and just then, the afternoon jazz program began. My little girl will tolerate nothing but classical. "N-o!" she shouted, stamping her foot on the floor. It was clear that if she had been old enough, she would have retired to England.

I got up and turned the radio off. She had never met her grandmother—who was also her great-grandmother, since her biological mother was my brother's daughter. I had adopted her.

"How would you like to fly in a big plane across the ocean?" I asked her.

"Can Teddy come?" He was sitting in her lap.

"Yes," I said, "Teddy can come, but this little

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piggy will have to stay home." I picked up my little dog, and he looked straight into my eyes as if saying, How can you do this to me after all we've meant to each other? "It's only temporary," I said to him. "I'll be back."

We Bryants clung to our animals as if they were our lovers, our lifelines. They helped us to have faith in ourselves. Maybe they *were* ourselves, or the most generous parts of ourselves. As the morning sun broke over the wing of our plane, light spilling ecstatically across the horizon, Tavy held Teddy up to the Pan Am window, pressing his button nose against the pane, showing him the sky, the clouds, the flashing blue-and-silver sea. "My nose is cold," she said in what appeared to me to be some kind of sympathetic confusion, falling back into her seat.

"You mean Teddy's nose, don't you?" I corrected her.

"Teddy's nose is a *button*," she said, amazed by my stupidity. She looked at me as if I were crazy. She didn't know I used to be. I smiled at her. "A nose by any other name would smell as sweet," I said, pretending to catch hers between my fingers, making the tip of a nose with my thumb.

My mother, who had been tall and beautiful, slender and strong, was now a wrinkled doll propped on pillows. She was an island in a sea of cigarette wrappers and ashtrays, Kleenex and toilet tissue, Rollo chocolates in gold tinfoil and half-full cups of cold cocoa, and the complete works of Dickens. Oscar, all gold fur, a live Rollo, sat at her side. I tried to straighten up the mess at the same time I embraced her and introduced Tavy.

I had been worried about this introduction.

As she gazed at her grandmother, Tavy's eyes grew rounder and rounder. They were green eyes—after the blue period of infancy, her eyes had turned green, though still a blue-green, elm-leaf eyes. My brother and my niece had both had true-green eyes, deep-green off-the-coast-of-Cozumel eyes; my mother's eyes, now weak and cloudy, had once been hazel-green, sometimes golden, sometimes gray. These subtleties of hue may mean nothing to anyone else but I had observed them with fascination. It was as if there were two branches to the family: the bold branch, with green eyes and outrageous energy; and the quiet brown-eyed branch, the observers.

"Why are you staring at me?" my mother asked Tavy. She'd had a minor stroke a few years earlier and the left side of her mouth seemed to resist any attempt at speech so that her words came out slightly scrunched, determined but fugitive, softly slurred.

Tavy said, "You're so old."

"Ha," my mother said. "You will be too, when you've lived as long as I have. And maybe by then you'll have something more interesting to say."

My mother had never liked children. Sometimes she would act as if she did, for the sake of her reputation among neighbors or co-workers, offering congratulatory comments over snapshots of newborns or reports of grade-school genius, but she would tell her own children, speaking about children-in-general, "They're more trouble than they're worth. After all, what are they going to be when they grow up? People!" Her dislike of children was minor compared with her contempt for adults, to which it was teleologically related. She would have liked it better if human beings could have grown up to be dogs or dolphins.

This was one reason I'd been worried about this introduction.

I was used to my mother's ways but Tavy wasn't, and I didn't want her feelings to get hurt. "I'll take Tavy upstairs and get her settled in," I said, standing behind my adopted daughter. And with a protective hand on each small shoulder, I tried to steer her away.

Tavy twisted free, turning back toward the bed. "Are you going to die?" she asked.

I watched my mother's parchmenty face crumple like a piece of paper history had wadded up and tossed into the trashcan of time. She had had such plans. Once upon a time, she had thought she would outlive my father by enough years to have a second, single life. She would travel to Scotland, take a boat trip through the Norwegian fjords; she would read every novel published before the 20th century (20th-century novels being by and large not worth reading), have affairs for adventure's sake even if the sex was uninteresting, become a CEO, quite possibly an astronaut as well, and in short, live the life she had never had a chance to live. Instead, she was an unhappy invalid, confined to her downstairs, and so far from being single that her late husband was still hanging around the house.

"Take Teddy upstairs," I said, pushing my daughter out of the room.

I sat on the bed and held my mother's hand. Oscar growled.

"I don't know what's wrong with me," she said. "All I do is cry. It's so stupid. I think maybe I've got Alzheimer's."

"It's not stupid," I argued. "On the contrary, it's completely logical. When your husband dies, you're supposed to feel sad." I said this knowing that it was a statement that would not carry much force for her. She thought sadness was a waste of time—if not precisely a fungus.

"I'm worried about him," she said. "Why is he hanging around here unless it's because he's not happy *there*?"

"Maybe he misses you," I said, "the way you miss him."

She sank back onto the pillows. I pulled the afghan up and tucked it in around her arms and sides. "Yes," she said, frowning, "that would make sense. Your father was never any good at being on his own. I always had to take care of him. But sometimes I got sick of it," she added.

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"The responsibility." She had closed her eyes; now she opened them again. "It's lucky for him he was a good fiddle player." She meant she wouldn't have loved him so if he hadn't been.

In the life she had actually lived, she had played second fiddle to his first in a succession of string quartets.

"Take a nap," I urged. "I have to unpack and tend to Tavy. She's worn out from the trip."

"She's a cute kid," my mother said, but then she couldn't keep from adding, "as kids go." She closed her eyes again.

I stood there a moment, looking at her—my mother, a creature of such complexity that it had taken me years even to begin to figure out how to untangle my self from hers.

She had set standards of self-discipline, hard work, and sound reasoning that had for years seemed, no matter how I drove myself, beyond my reach. Yet now, to my surprise, they didn't seem high *enough*—they were predicated on a need to disown everything human, and so were still dependent on everything human, whereas I had arrived at a point where my ambitions simply grew out of my work. I had an inkling of where it might go, my work, and the world's opinion of it or of any art had become irrelevant.

I wished she would consent to understand this. I wanted her to believe, with me, that in adopting Tavy I had not been betraying her or her ideals, that I was merely being true to myself.

Oscar was a little larger than a caramel-covered apple, and about the same color. His coat was a heart-meltingly beautiful gold with light and dark streaks. His squashed-in face resembled that of an ancient Chinese emperor or sage. He glared at me.

By the next day, Tavy and I had recovered from our jet lag. I put Tavy out into the back yard, the same way my father had let Blaze out for his morning constitutional. Oscar went out with her but he was back in seconds, his fur fringed in dew; he refused to leave my mother any more than was absolutely necessary.

When I wasn't there, my mother managed with a patchwork system of part-time nurses, helpful neighbors, and a cleaning woman who came in mornings. In my honor, she had dismissed most of these. I spent the day plumping her pillows, fixing meals, helping her to the commode chair, emptying the commode chair, washing dishes, answering the telephone, handling business correspondence, bringing in the milk, doling out pills—and then there was Tavy. I hadn't a minute to myself, and before long, I was exhausted. So when I bumped into my father in the kitchen, I told myself I was seeing things. The power of suggestion coupled with repressed hysteria and total tiredness was causing me to hallucinate. My father just shook his head, slowly, sadly, the way he'd always done when he was feeling pessimistic.

"It's true," he said. "I'm really here." He sighed heavily, as if this was not only unlikely but lamentable.

"But why?" I asked.

"Search me," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "I don't have any idea what's going on. I've got a hunch it's like what Satchmo said about jazz: if you have to ask, you'll never know."

He was nicely dressed in a pale green long-sleeved shirt and gray slacks. He had always cared about clothes, although he'd rarely spent any money on them for himself.

He was thin, with dark, thinning, but attractively unruly, hair that had the right amount of gray in it. He looked stronger than he had in his last year of life, but he was still frail. When he took off his glasses to rub the bridge of his nose where they pinched, I could see, in his large brown eyes, the intelligence that had made him who he was, before Alzheimer's disease had come along like a thief, some sort of mental mugger, and snatched it away, leaving him someone he wasn't. In other words, I realized, this was indeed the ghost of my *father*—not the ghost of the pitiful physical envelope that had contained an Alzheimer's victim.

I wondered if something had happened to him that I was supposed to exact revenge for, so his wandering spirit could find peace. I wondered if this kitchen were the modern equivalent of parapets and that was why he was here. Was he restless? Had he been wronged?

I sat down at the table. My mother had dozed off in the living room, in front of the telly, after the seven o'clock news. "I don't understand," I said, facing him. "I thought ghosts, if there were any, would be the residue of souls who died violently or at any rate before their time. You were seventy-eight. You had emphysema almost as bad as Mother's. You had arthritis. You had Alzheimer's. A stroke was probably the best thing that could have happened to you."

But even as I was saying this, I was remembering how alone he had been when he died.

He had been at the rest home for a week—not for his sake but to give my mother a rest. She could still walk unaided then, though barely, and she wore herself out day after day trying to take care of him. He thought that by going into the home for a short stint, giving her a respite, he could put off the day when she might feel compelled to send him there forever.

The day before he was to come home, she slipped in the bathroom and fell, hitting her head on the sink and also hurting her back. This was the bathroom she had tiled herself, a dark green paragraph of tiles punctuated here and there with the odd Dutch scene, Jack and Jill carrying pails, or a windmill in a tulip field. Confined to bed, she was unable to look after her husband, but his room in the rest home had been spoken for, so the doctor arranged to have him moved to a second rest home.

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It wasn't far—a few blocks down the street from the little red-brick house. His room was at the back and had a view onto a duck pond. It was Christmas Eve, and that afternoon the Salvation Army threw a party in the lounge for the "guests." Every so often, my father, the musician, would recognize one of the carols and shout out a word or two—a kind of rudimentary singing.

After the party, back in his room, he was sitting in the chair by the window, gazing at the ducks, trying to comprehend how it was that he'd once been a small, obedient boy in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and then was a shy, intense young man in Chicago and Louisiana and New York, and then a middle-aged man in Virginia, and now had become a dotty old fool in a rest home in England, separated by illness and accident from the woman with whom he'd lived for over fifty years. He thought this would have been difficult to fathom even if he had not been senile. The ducks in the pond were so bright, as bright as paint. The sky was as gray as a goose, with pinfeather clouds.

Suddenly his heart seemed to double over, and his left arm, which had for most of his life been a kind of mast, holding his violin aloft in musical light, crashed against his chest with a killing weight.

He could still think, images were still vividly present to his consciousness even if the connections among them were sometimes scrambled, and what he thought about at this moment was his wife. "Is Mother all right?" he asked in the ambulance, on the way to the hospital. He pictured her at home, alone, ill and worrying about him.

But right after he asked about her, even before the ambulance had reached the hospital, the walls of his brain gave way too—it was a general collapse, his entire body falling apart section by section, being demolished by the great wrecking ball of age. "The walls of his brain were incredibly thin," the doctor said. "There was massive bleeding."

His lungs and legs were still working. The doctor had said my father would die before daybreak, but Christmas afternoon, a nurse found him wandering the hallways. "A reflex action," they said; they said he could not have thoughts or feelings anymore. What did they know about his thoughts and feelings? He could still refer to himself as "I," as in "I'm thirsty." They decided not to give him water or food; he was starving to death. On the 27th, he died, unattended even by machines.

And so, he must have come back because he was lonely. I'd been right—he missed my mother. He nodded. "I never liked that little dog, though," he said. "I couldn't get used to his taking Blaze's place."

"Where is Blaze? Why isn't he here?"

"Imagine being able to do what you want to do and being able to do it forever," he said. "Blaze is in heaven, chasing squirrels."

So animals *did* have souls, I said to myself, satisfied to wipe out one very disagreeable strain in theological thought.

"And you play your violin," I said, sure that this was what he would want to do forever.

"No. After all these years, it just doesn't feel right without your mother next to me on second, smoking up a storm and criticizing my intonation. How is she?"

"She's okay," I said. "Demanding. You know how she is."

"She always kept us on our toes," he said.

"Yes."

"Don't let her make you feel too bad about the kid," he said. "She's a cute kid." (Like all parents, they sometimes quoted each other without knowing it. Or maybe he did know it—had been listening, invisible but not insensible, at the foot of my mother's bed when I displayed Tavy to her.)

All at once, I wanted to know what *he* thought about the fact that the mother of his children didn't like children, but I could hardly ask him this directly. It might disturb him, and I didn't want to make his restless spirit any more restless. "Do you really think Tavy's cute?" I said.

"Adopting her was the right thing to do. And I think you need her."

As he said this, his voice dropped to a spectral pitch, like an undertone, and I realized I could see the back of his chair through his body.

"You're fading!" I cried.

"I always did fade about this time of night. Good night, Nina," he said.

He was gone.

Oscar came tearing into the kitchen. He made a circle from the kitchen through the dining room and living room and foyer back to the kitchen—again and again.

"Oscar's gone crazy," I said to my mother, waking her up and helping her from the wing chair to her bed.

"Your father must have been here. He and Oscar never got along. They saw themselves as rivals for my time."

He leapt onto the bed. He had a beard, a Confucian beard, and his eyes were clever. My little dog at home was not nearly so clever, but sweeter. And clever, just not so clever.

My mother wanted pills, a glass of water, a cup of cocoa, to make a list. Tavy was crying upstairs. "Mommy, Mommy, Mommy," she yelled. I ran upstairs, downstairs, upstairs. I felt as if I were running back and forth between my past and the future.

TAVY never saw my father. Apparently, since she had not known him in life, she was not supposed to know him in death. He took an interest in her, however.

"You'd better get her started on the violin right away," he said. "She's already almost too old."

He was resting his chin in his palms, elbows propped on the linoleum-top table.

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"I don't know," I said. "I remember how painful it was when you gave me lessons. It felt like my arm was going to break off."

"That's ridiculous, Nina. Your arm couldn't have hurt. Nothing is more malleable than a young child's bones."

I remembered it hurting.

"She takes ballet lessons," I offered. In the Meadow Scene, she had been a bee, buzzing her way across the stage in a black leotard striped with yellow crepe paper.

When I said she took ballet, he started to fade. I knew he wouldn't consider ballet music real music, and I said, "You can't just fade whenever things don't go the way you want them to."

"I don't see why not," he said. "It's one of the advantages of being dead."

"Is that you, Avery?" my mother called from the other room. "What are you two talking about?"

She pulled herself along in her walker, entering the kitchen by degrees. Finally she was in her chair across from him. They looked at each other over the table, a doll-size table for doll-size people in a doll-size house in a doll-size country.

"Well, Ave," she said, "it's a hell of a note, isn't it. I'm just barely alive and you don't seem to be quite dead."

"Would anybody like some ice cream?" I asked.

They both nodded. I dished it up into three bowls; it was vanilla. They wanted chocolate syrup so I heated the open can in a pot of water on the stove. It was an aluminum pot and I wondered if it had been a contributing factor in my father's getting Alzheimer's. I drizzled the syrup over the ice cream. Tavy was asleep upstairs, snug in her dreams. Oscar sat on the floor at my mother's feet. Unlike Blaze, he liked peaches but not ice cream.

"WHAT'S it like over there?" I asked, perching on the tall stool at the sink counter. I felt like an overgrown child in a high chair. There wasn't room for a third chair at the table.

"I don't really know," he said. "I haven't had much of a chance to look around yet. The climate is better, I guess. Not so much rain. I suppose that is because heaven is not an island."

Was it a continent? Maybe heaven was the *ocean*, and our entire universe one small island in it. "Do you have to listen to a lot of harp music?" This had been nagging at me. The Mozart Flute and Harp Concerto was nice, but for an eternity?

"I don't think you understand. Being dead isn't at all like being alive. You don't *do* things over there, you just are them. I believe it's got something to do with everything's happening faster than the speed of light. Because everything happens faster than the speed of light, doing and being are the same thing. You don't listen to music, you *are* music," my father said.

"How lovely," said my mother, who had always had a running argument with the world as it was. She thought it would be desirable to shed both the body and the ego, emerging as a work of art rather than a worker of art. In this, she reminded me of Van Gogh. Or Buddha or Einstein, for that matter, since she was in no way parochial about the forms of beauty.

"A poem does not mean but be," I said, slightly disgusted.

"Close," my father said. "But still not exactly right. There's still meaning—nobody wants to eliminate that. It's just that it now resides in what *is*, not in what *isn't*. If you think about it, you'll see that on earth it is always absence that is meaningful. And that is the source of all unhappiness."

I found all this very disturbing. Although it sounded like a fine premise—heaven as eternal being—I was not at all sure I would in fact want to give up either creation or contemplation, which is what the premise seemed to entail. There had to be a separation between maker or thinker and the thing made or the thing thought about, or else there wouldn't be any making or thinking. If unity was all, there was no relatedness—and I liked the idea of relation. I liked being in relation to the thing I was trying to bring into being and liked losing myself in that effort. I liked the idea that the idea of union was predicated on the idea of divorce. It wasn't just the paradox that appealed to me; it was the idea of desire, of longing for achievement. Throwing that out would throw out a number of other things, too—the concept of development would go, for example, as in the sustained developmental passage of a Beethoven string quartet, and that was the linchpin of my philosophy of art. That was the baby I didn't want tossed out the window with the bathwater. (I had seen Tavy not so much as an opportunity to revise the story of my own life as the chance to write a sequel. She was the extension of me; she was my self projecting itself into otherness, my self losing itself, ultimately to become herself—the way a novel, muscling its way through time, emerges on the last page as something that can suddenly be seen to be both inherent in and utterly different from the opening sentence.)

In brief, if there was no gap, no shortfall between start and finish, there was no possibility of becoming.

That is to say—if my father was to be believed, and though reticent, he had always been a man of truth—the continuous tense had, in heaven, epiphanically revealed itself to be a predicate.

"Let me get this straight," my mother said. "Blaze is not simply chasing squirrels, he somehow *is* chasing squirrels. He is the very idea of a dog chasing squirrels. Similarly, if I wanted to fly, I would just *be* flying."

I saw her with her arms outstretched—or at least the good arm outstretched, the other, flattened by stroke, tucked against the side—homing in on Heathrow.

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"And if," she said, taunting him (she was ever the tease), "I wanted to make love, though God knows I never would, I would just *be* love."

"Lovemaking, actually," my father said, a glint in his eye.

"I'd rather be the idea of flight."

"Not the idea. The thing itself."

"I like the ideas," I said, feeling threatened, as if somebody were about to deprive me of them—as my father must have felt, as he sensed his illness encroaching on the private property of his brain. "I don't want to give them up. They're what make the things themselves interesting. A thing without an idea would be like a plane without an engine. It *wouldn't* fly."

"I should never have told you two about this," my father said, fading. "I should have known that if anybody would have criticism to make about heaven, it would be the two of you."

"You come back here, Avery!" my mother called. "It's not fair of you to keep slipping away like this!"

But he was gone. I washed the dishes.

The house was in a close, a dead-end drive like a sclerotic artery to the heart of the development. Dogs and cats and children played on the front lawns and welcomed the paperboy, the milkman, the greengrocer, the butcher, the cleaning man, the window washer, the refuse collector, the television serviceman (in England, only the rich own television sets; everyone else rents), and the teenaged boy who came to mow my mother's lawn.

To my mother's house also came the doctor, the district nurse who bathed her, the physical therapist who exercised her muscles, the hairdresser who washed and set her sparse white hair, the elderly female postal clerk who came out of her way to bring the stamps she allowed my mother to order over the telephone, and the neighbors—even when the part-time housekeeper and the part-time private nurses and the handyman who did her grocery shopping and the woman who stopped in to get her breakfast for her were not, as they now were not, there.

Among the neighbors was a retired constable who now donated his time to the local volunteer squad, taking sick people to hospital and collecting them when they were well, accompanying the elderly on their visits to the clinic at Mortimer, and serving as my mother's banker. The first of the world wars had shattered his family's fortunes and diverted his own future from its expected course, through university, into the police academy, from which he had emerged as a staunchly conservative supporter of the class system. I never could fathom this peculiarly English tendency to applaud one's own oppression. He was like a tall, silver-haired, barrel-chested bird alighting from time to time in our living room, bearing not twigs in his beak for our nest but the cash my mother had asked him to withdraw from her account. He was both kindly and argumentative. Like many Englishmen, he could never really believe that any woman would seriously oppose any of his opinions, and of course my mother opposed them all. In her old age, my mother had become radicalized. She sat in front of the telly making wisecracks about Maggie Thatcher. She styled herself a Social Democrat, but recognizing that her party hadn't a prayer, was willing to throw in her lot with the labor unionists. Malcolm, the male bastion of suburban conservatism, thought these political sympathies adorably female and unbelievably ridiculous. My mother invariably responded by acting adorably female, right up to the point where *he'd* say something ridiculous, and then she'd spring the particular trap she had set on that occasion. They were devoted to each other and had great fun playing this cat-and-mouse game, each being convinced that the other was the mouse.

"The trouble with Reagan," my mother announced from the wing chair one day as Malcolm towered in front of her, his back against the bay window as if he were shielding us from the world, "is that he's so stupid it's impossible for anyone to communicate with him. Now you take Star Wars. Everyone's running around building satellites and laser guns because nobody has ever stopped to figure out that in Reagan's mind this was a reference to *Gunfight at the OK Corral*. We could all get killed because he thinks being President of the United States is no different from being President of the Screen Actors Guild."

My mother's eyes were guileless, even blank: in age, they had the peculiar quality a television screen has in the dark when it is turned off, that ability to glow without light. It was the expectant thrust of her jaw, the way her chin was tilted slightly up—as if she were somehow ready to take it on the chin—that gave her away. I wondered how long she had been waiting to say this to Malcolm.

Malcolm has a high color. His face turned as red as the light on the washing machine in my mother's kitchen; he looked like he'd entered a spin cycle. Tavy, who had materialized in the living room holding Teddy upside down by one leg, looked up at him. "Are you going to die too?" she asked.

"This child is a necrophiliac," my mother said.

"Now, now, Tavy," Malcolm said, bending down to confront her at eye level. When he said her name, it sounded like Tah-vy instead of Ta-vy. "You must not think that everybody's going to die just because your grandfather did."

We had not informed the neighborhood of the intricacies of Tavy's appearance on earth, so Malcolm didn't know that Tavy's grandfather was also her great-grandfather.

"If you die," she said, looking him in the eye and gnawing on Teddy's leg, "you can have some ice cream."

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I looked out the bay window, both fascinated and embarrassed while she went on to explain her statement.

"That's what Grandpa does," she said. "He has ice cream every night in the kitchen."

"And do you say hello to him?" Malcolm asked, humoring her.

There were blue tits and coal tits crowded together on the evergreen, and a small brown wren in the sumac bush. The Woodbines' Burmese cat was watching the wren closely.

"No," she said. "I can't see him. But Mommy and Grandma do. I hear them talking to him when I'm in bed."

Malcolm stood up, knees cracking. He brushed Oscar's dog hairs from his trousers. "She certainly has an active imagination. I guess it's an artistic family, isn't it, Eleanor."

"More's the pity," she admitted.

"I should think that artists are well-nigh obliged to be a bit illogical," he continued smoothly. "They say there's only a fine line between genius and insanity." He glanced slyly at my mother, as if he'd scored a decisive point.

I excused myself and went out to the kitchen and sat down in my father's chair at the table and laid my check against the cool linoleum of the table top. Because my father had made this table, I felt like I was placing my cheek next to his.

Nobody in the other room, I was thinking, knew how close I had come to crossing that line, once upon a time.

I opened an eye and realized that Oscar had followed me and was looking up at me. It was the first time he had treated me like something other than a potential enemy. I picked him up and began to stroke him. My little dog at home had density, solidity, a firm, round stomach emphatically real, not to mention greedy. Oscar fell across my lap as lightly as silk; he seemed to be made of cloth, I was wearing a live, gold skirt.

From the other room I heard sounds of laughter. Malcolm called out, "I'm leaving now!" and I heard the door shut behind him. I shook Oscar off and went back into the living room. Tavy looked worried. "Mommy, do I imagine things?"

"Of course you do," I said. "Everyone does."

"But do you talk with Grandpa, or not?"

"Why not?" I said. "Why shouldn't people talk to the dead? Where are you going to find a better bunch of listeners?"

"Take it from me," my mother added. "Your grandfather makes a whole lot more sense than Ronald Reagan. Even dead. Even with Alzheimer's."

DESPITE these brief (but for me, how shining!) moments of communion among my mother, my daughter, and myself, there was more often a tug of war going on, with me as the rope.

I was nervously aware of my mother's deep skepticism about me, her feeling that my having elected to live with and care for a child made it doubtful that I'd complete the work I had always insisted I would do. She looked at me with the corners of her mouth turned down in disgust and even fear, as if I'd betrayed her, as if my action had been a wanton assault on everything she'd tried to teach me. To myself, I thought, Beethoven had his nephew—why shouldn't I adopt my grandniece? But I had more sense than to say that out loud.

When Tavy was being cute, I felt vindicated—but also guilty, for proving my mother wrong. And when Tavy was cranky or mean, banging a spoon against the floor just because she enjoyed the distress it caused us, or screaming until she seemed to have turned into a tiny human horn, all noise and out of tune, I avoided my mother's eyes, guiltily fearing a told-you-so look. All this guilt was getting me down, and I would no doubt have felt sorry for myself if there'd ever been any time to, but my days were cataracts of busyness, chores cascading from dawn to dusk, one long waterfall of obligation.

I had tried to do right by them both, and they both seemed to think I had failed them, I had abandoned them, each for the sake of the other.

WHAT I would have liked was a stiff drink. What I got was ice cream.

In the kitchen that night, my mother and father and I discussed my brother. "It was our fault," my mother, in a breast-beating mood, said, referring to his spectacular decline and fall, which had ended in his death from alcoholism. My mother got into these self-blaming moods but perhaps they were more an expression of her perfectionism than of pity. "We had no money and couldn't give him any of the things he wanted. When he was a freshman in college, he had only one pair of pants. One day your father discovered he had nothing to wear under them."

This fact dazzled me. I had never understood exactly why we had always been so broke. According to my parents, my brother and I had made excessive demands on their finances, yet my brother had no *underwear*. Birthday presents were a Hershey bar. We seldom got books and never lessons or anything like that. Maybe the violins, the bows, had consumed all the money. Maybe we were just poorer than I ever really understood.

"Alcoholism is a sickness," I said, "a disease. People know that now."

"He could have quit," my mother said. "People do."

"There's a problem here," my father interjected. "At what point does addiction override free will? If you quit drinking, are you still addicted?"

"Members of AA refer to themselves as recovering alcoholics," I explained, "no matter how long they've been dry."

"But then Mother is right, drinking *isn't* purely a disease. It's a disease you can choose to have

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or not to have, and what other disease do you know of like that? Believe me," he said, "I could have used a choice when it came to Alzheimer's."

We were all silent for a minute. To lose your mind, I was thinking, what a sorrow, what a shock.

In the hospital, I had thought I was losing mine: it used to disappear for hours on end, then slip back, like a teenager into the house, at the last minute.

I'd never told my parents about any of this because they had said that they did not want to hear any bad news; they had had crisis-ridden lives, burdened with debt, they said, and they wanted no more stories of trouble. We were a family with secrets—where the money went, who was crazy, who slept with whom, whose child was whose, how anyone felt.

"You'd better be careful that Tavy doesn't start drinking," my mother continued. "Your father had a sister who drank." My father clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth at this mention of Aunt Millicent, a husky-voiced redhead who had died at age seventy surrounded by empty vodka bottles, but who, he thought, my mother should now be willing to let rest in peace. "And your brother? —"

"Your son," I reminded her.

"And I suspect Babette drinks, wherever she is."

Babette was Tavy's biological mother, a teenaged runaway last seen heading for California. No one knew what to think about her. Suppose she was a hooker. Suppose she had AIDS.

Suppose, I thought more happily, she was a starlet in scarlet, a bikini'd bathing beauty in oversized sunglasses, lounging on a rubber raft in a Beverly Hills pool, tiny American flags decaled on her insouciant toenails?

"You don't know that," I said. "Babette could be a teetotaler." Though this seemed unlikely, if she was hanging out around a pool in Beverly Hills. "And it's a little early to worry about Tavy's drinking habits."

My father said, "What a morbid conversation this is."

"You're dead, Avery. What do you expect?"

A still moon shone in through the kitchen door, which had a key-lock, a latch, and top and bottom bolts because a couple of years ago my parents had gotten worried about the wave of granny-bashing that was rolling over England. I undid all the locks and let Oscar out. He trotted down the narrow walk that led from the patio, along the hedge, ten feet tall, on the right side of the lawn, to the second patio, under the oak tree, where rhododendrons and rose bushes bloomed.

In the moonlight, his gold coat gleamed like a pound coin. I wondered again why my family had always fretted so about money. (I knew that money was one of my major themes, waiting for a critic who could trace and analyze its appearance in my various works.)

Oscar sniffed at the bushes, then raised his head and looked at the hushed night sky, as if listening to some constellatory music only animals could hear. Out there, in that darkness, there might be answers to all our questions. Or there might be just more questions. I shivered, unsweatered in the cold, and called to Oscar to come in. He turned around to look at me, and though he was at the other end of the lawn, in the dark, I could have sworn he was right in front of me, bright as dawn, hypnotic as a gold watch. In the cool dampness of the English dark, he was like some strange changeling, a silky, sulky midsummer sprite.

I SLEPT in my father's bed. Tavy was on the cot in the extremely small room that my mother had used as an office for keeping the household finances. No one used my mother's bedroom; the fiction was that when she was feeling better she would move back upstairs.

On the wall facing the headboard of my father's bed was a window, and next to it, a framed photograph of my father's violin. The violin had been auctioned at Sotheby's. The photograph was actually four small photographs: from a book featuring his violin, among others, he had cut out four plates and had taped them behind four "windows" razored into a piece of cardboard; then he labeled the mat in his flowing composer's hand, and put a frame around it. I now wondered why he'd never felt entitled to have a photograph professionally made and framed.

The window faced west, so night clung to it as long as it could. As light began to reach down from the upper story of the sky, doves cooed under the eaves as if to welcome it. Magpies and hummingbirds sent out their own BBC signals—Better Bird Casting. Still half-asleep, I listened to that dreamy music as if it were a score—*the* score, the one I had always been trying to find out.

I couldn't lie in bed for long because my mother wouldn't permit it. At five-thirty, there'd be a huge pounding noise coming from the ceiling below, and I'd wake in a rush of adrenaline, thinking alarm. She was beating on the ceiling with her broomstick.

"If I don't have to sleep," she said, "I don't see why anyone else should have to." She actually said that to me, as I stared at her, bleary-eyed, from the foot of her bed. I was wearing an old shirt over a cotton nightgown, and socks that had caused me to slip as I ran down the stairs, banging my hipbone bad enough so a stabbing pain would sometimes radiate up my back. I wanted to tell her that her "toughness" was no longer cute. That it may have been cute fifty years ago, but now it was indistinguishable from a lack of consideration for other people.

But I just stared at her, amazed she could say such a thing and too afraid of hurting her to confront her. I'd always been afraid of hurting her. The thing was, the older I got, the more I began to be angry about this. "We don't want to know about any problems," she'd said, but I wanted her

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to *know* me. This anger . . . it was as if part of me was regressing. At this rate, when I reached her age, I'd be a withered-up three-year-old, wanting everyone to make up for my mother's selfishness. It was figuring this out—that generalized anger, anybody's generalized anger, stemmed from a belated desire to have someone make up for early neglect and was a kind of regression—that saved my temper: I realized I was dealing with a three-year-old. And I already knew how to deal with a three-year-old.

Tavy, Oscar, and Teddy were taking tea in the living room. With each day that passed, Oscar had become a little less grudging toward Tavy, and now he was lying on his stomach on the green carpet, a thimble-sized teacup of painted wood just beyond his punched-in muzzle. Teddy was sitting up, leaning against the wing chair. Tavy was pouring.

When I saw the miniature dishes, bright golden wood painted with a delicate row of blue and green flowers, I felt myself being carried back in time, tugged out to sea by the strong undertow of memory, that current of images and sensations that has so much to do with the direction we take in life but which we are usually unaware of.

I fixed breakfast for my mother, Tavy, and Oscar. "You forgot Teddy's breakfast," Tavy said, looking at me accusingly. I gave him a dog biscuit, but then Oscar wanted one too. I unlocked the kitchen door and shooed the trio into the back yard.

On the brick patio under the oak tree, they played in the summer light. They were like creatures from another world, a world of timelessness whose dimensions had spread out by mistake and gotten ensnared with ours; otherwise, these small aliens would not be known to us even to the temporary extent that they were. I leaned against the doorjamb, letting my spine sag. I wanted to weep, thinking that one day Tavy would be my age. I would be a demanding old woman. One day Oscar would make a last trip to the vet. One day even Teddy would go to the vast grave of teddy bears, the stuffing knocked out of him, ears and eyes and button nose beyond repair.

"Come here," my mother yelled, snapping me out of my sad reverie.

I had helped her into the wing chair in front of the telly, but the screen was dark. She was reading a biography of Dickens. She lit a cigarette. I had to keep an eye on her because whenever she opened a new pack of cigarettes, she performed a ritual coda by touching the lighter to the cellophane wrapping, starting small fires in the ashtray.

"Yes?" I said.

My mother the pyromaniac watched as the cellophane flared and died, the bitter odor of burning plastic a sudden, sharp note on the air. "What's going to happen to your work now that you've got Tavy to take care of?"

I knew that she had been waiting to ask me this just as she had waited for the right moment to taunt Malcolm with her remark about Reagan.

"It's going to deepen," I said. "It's going to widen."

I understood that she would feel compelled to argue the opposite case, since she had always believed that having children had hampered *her*. "It's not that we didn't want you," she rushed to assure me. "But you don't know what you're getting into. All I did for years was worry about you children."

This last statement was not true, but it must have seemed true to her. She wanted to believe it. It even occurred to me that maybe the reason it had not been true was that if she *had* paid any attention to us, it *would have been* true. Maybe she had turned away from us not out of disinterest or selfishness but fear, feeling that, if she were to acknowledge our existence, the attendant responsibilities would suffocate her.

Thinking about her blighted life, she started to cry. More and more, she was doing this, swinging between moods. She'd be angry one minute, disconsolate the next. If you said something to cheer her up or comfort her, she'd look at you with those clouded eyes that didn't seem to see you and say, "Ha." Like that: "Ha."

I yanked a Kleenex from the box and handed it to her. She let it drop, slamming her fists into her chest as if some internal mechanism had suddenly gone haywire and pulled her arms up short. The same screwed-up guy wires had twisted her face into a look of agony. I thought, Oh God, oh God. I grabbed the buzzer for the Lifeline Unit. A voice came over the speaker: "Mrs. Bryant? Mrs. Bryant?"

"This is Nina Bryant," I shouted. "I think my mother is having a heart attack."

In no time, there was an ambulance in the driveway. Malcolm had come over and was standing in front of my mother, trying to persuade her to let them take her to the hospital, where they could run tests to see if she had indeed had a heart attack. The ambulance drivers waited at the door to the living room, caps in hand. Tavy and Oscar had come in from outside and wandered among the grown-ups as if among tall trees.

"I don't want to," my mother said. "The last time I was in hospital, I had to stay awake all night because a lesbian kept trying to pinch me."

The three tall Englishmen stared down at the carpet. I knew my mother sounded crazy to them: scrunched-up old ladies weren't even supposed to know words like "lesbian."

"It's true," I said, as if my mother were on trial and I was her defense lawyer. "I was there once when it happened. The woman was ninety-three but she was horny. The nurses just laughed at her and took her back to her own bed, but from my mother's point of view, it wasn't funny at all."

Imagine what it would be like to be unable to

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get away, unable to get out of your own bed, lying there in the dark, feeling like prey.

"It's important to find out whether or not you've suffered a heart attack, Eleanor," Malcolm said again.

"Important to whom?" my mother said. "It's not important to me."

"It's important to me," I said, and she started to cry again.

SHE wanted to die, or at least she said she did. She made jokes about how, no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't seem to pull it off. She said if she could just die, she'd give God a piece of her mind. It was a hell of a way to run a universe, she'd tell Him: all this evil and illness, death and decay and bad art.

She said she wanted to die, but the truth was she was afraid to. She had so much invested in being herself. Dying meant giving all that up, and nothing scared her as much as giving up.

I attributed this fear of surrender to some early-developed sense of being easily overwhelmed, perhaps in response to having two sisters enough older than she was that it was like having three mothers. Or maybe the loss of an Edenic childhood, lived among cypresses and water moccasins and bright birds as flamboyant as flying graffiti, in a bayou in Louisiana, had translated itself into lifelong anxiety about further loss. Or maybe, as the youngest, the baby of the family, her father's favorite, she had felt forever cheated, after she discovered that no matter how good a daughter she was, she was not going to be allowed to remain his daughter forever.

I think she had been shocked to find herself an adult, and with more than her fair share of responsibility. She had done her best to recover, tossing out all childish things in a wholesale psychological housecleaning. In the battle to define herself against whatever it was she perceived as a threat, she had defeated the almost pathological shyness of her youth and gone on guard against all revelations of vulnerability. The result was—my mother, the seventy-eight-pound warrior on 24-hour-a-day alert. She had not surrendered to herself; she wasn't about to surrender to anyone else; she could not bear the thought of surrendering to death—she kept thinking there had to be a way she could do this on her own terms.

It was because she hated the thought of surrendering that she disdained politicians. It was why she disliked sex, though she *said* the reason she didn't like sex was that it was about as interesting as having someone stick a pencil in your ear.

And yet, what a passionate romance she'd had with my father for fifty tumultuous years.

Now, in her old age, she was as small and brown-spotted as a mushroom, growing in the forest of her bed. Her skin, creased as leather, was as soft as suede. Her breasts had vanished, receding when they became no longer relevant. And this was a woman who had been five-six-and-a-half, with outstanding legs.

I made more of her beauty than she did. She hardly ever wore makeup; for her, her beauty was just a fact, like her height.

For me, her beauty was a standard. And it was a clue, as if, by deciphering it, I could understand why her youth had been so different from mine. It was interesting to me to imagine her at twenty, say, with her hair cut in a "windblown" style, and wearing a white coat bought specifically for walking along the shore on those lovely gray days in Gulfport when the breezes were cool and there was spray from the surf and a hint of storm in the air. She would look out over the Gulf in the direction of Mexico and South America, constructing the future as an exotic landscape just over the horizon. She danced the nights away with her boyfriends, who were plentiful, at a waterfront pavilion in Biloxi. Her mother had made her a white organdy evening dress, trimmed in red, for the Valentine dance, and a black-and-white striped dimity with a black velvet sash for afternoon parties. Sometimes she and her friends went to drive-in movies, or they organized torchlit expeditions to spear flounder in the shallow water at the base of the seawall. In the afternoons they sailed, or played putt-putt on the miniature golf course by the municipal pier, or drove up and down the beach road, stopping occasionally for Cokes and hot dogs.

When I was the age she had been then, I attended a banquet with my parents. During dessert, the man sitting next to me turned to me and said, as if this were a fact I had to be forced to face, "You'll never be as beautiful as your mother." As soon as the coffee cups were cleared away and the dancing had started, I got the car keys from my father, excused myself and went out to the car, let myself in and curled up in the back seat and cried, long into the sycamore-scented night. I cried on the drive home. I cried all weekend, shut up in my room. My mother's response to all this unexplained self-pity was, as usual, disgust, but I was afraid that if I told her what the matter was, she would feel guilty. I didn't want her to feel she'd let me down genetically. My father came into my room and tried to get me to talk, but I couldn't tell him, either, because he would get worried that there was something going on between my mother and the man who had spoken to me, because he was always worried that he loved her more than she loved him and she might fall in love with someone else and have an affair and leave him. To make himself more attractive to her, he had recently spent $900 on Arthur Murray dance lessons, in secret, so he would be able to dance with her at the banquet. I didn't know how to dance either, but girls weren't supposed to need lessons.

"Do you remember when Daddy went to Arthur Murray?" I asked her.

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"Ha," she said.

"Ha?"

"Nobody's dancing now."

She had such a sad look on her—her mouth dragged down and trembling, her eyes like one-way windows that she could see out of but you couldn't see in. She was wearing her favorite outfit, a pink "sweatsuit" with a pastel-blue bunny over the heart. She had high cheekbones and in profile still looked like the young Katharine Hepburn.

Though she read constantly, she also liked to be read to. I sat at the foot of the bed, squinting, under the pale light of the overhead fixture, at the microbe-sized print in her gilt-edged "fine" editions with ribbon bookmarks. Tavy would join us, her small face screwed up in tight concentration as if she were following every word of *Barchester Towers*. One afternoon my mother broke into my reading to ask, "How far back can you remember?" I started to answer her when she said, "Not you. I'm talking to Tavy. Do you remember lying in your crib?" my mother asked her. "Do you remember the curtains in your bedroom blowing in over your crib? I do."

Tavy stuck her thumb in her mouth.

"I remember tying and untying a gauze bandage on my big toe," my mother went on. "I remember the lavender kimono I was wearing when my parents took me to the hospital to have my tonsils out—and that was before I was two. It seems like the closer you are to these events, like Tavy, the better you'd remember them, but it's just the opposite, isn't it? They come back to you as you get older. Isn't that ironic!"

"Probably the older you get, the farther back you can remember," I said. "Probably one day you have a blinding recollection of being born, and in the same instant you die."

We looked at each other and started to laugh, a few collusive giggles at first and then we laughed harder and harder. Tavy just looked at us and continued to suck her thumb. I was afraid she thought we were laughing at her, but I couldn't seem to stop long enough to explain. I didn't know how to explain. Later, I wondered what she would remember of this.

I knew I was not paying enough attention to Tavy. Not that she was alone—Malcolm frequently looked after her, and she had become a great favorite in the neighborhood. She was also gifted at the art of amusing herself. Lately she had taken to giving song recitals to Oscar and Teddy, who sat on the floor facing her. She revised the texts of these songs with abandon. "Where, oh where has my little dog gone?" became "Puppy gone. Where, oh where be?" "Oh come, let us adore him" was transformed into "Oh come little outside door him." There was one song she liked to sing that may even have been an original: "Oh Jeesy, Jeesy, Jeesy, they all play with toys, and they don't take up the nickels."

But I knew she felt I had deserted her. When I put her to bed at night, and she stared up at me without saying anything, or rolled over onto her pillow without throwing her arms around me to say goodnight first, I wanted to apologize. *I* wanted to apologize when she was *good*, because she was an active, risk-taking, free-spirited kid who was *supposed* to be misbehaving, who was *supposed* to be apologizing to me, and if she was being good, it was because she thought I had lost interest in her and believed that the only way for her to get my attention back or please me was by changing her ways.

I knew what it felt like to struggle to impress one's existence on a parent by impressing the parent.

But Tavy did have an existence, and my mother might not have hers for much longer, so it seemed to me my first duty was to her.

But I also acknowledged that I might have been seizing on that fact to excuse another, which was that I felt ashamed, in front of my mother, to have been found out as a human being, a female human being at that, one with a desire to be a mother herself that had been so uncontrollable that she had dared to adopt.

And I felt ashamed, before Tavy, to feel such shame.

It was a mess. I was trying to be—I *was*—both mother and *daughter*. And I didn't want to lose my mother.

Since we didn't know for sure whether or not she had had a heart attack, I thought I'd better go on the assumption that she had. From the local health service, I got pamphlets on how to do CPR. But I knew it would be an iffy matter, blowing air into lungs already rendered half-inoperative by emphysema.

She would not consider a nursing home; that would've meant giving up Oscar.

They were a pair. She and Oscar would sit up side by side in the single bed, the one smoking a cigarette and drinking cocoa, the other chewing on a rubber shoe.

Malcolm said that after she died, he would take Oscar.

Because my mother was always cold, the house was usually sealed tight, even though it was summer. I imagined we might live there forever. I imagined us whirling through space and time like Dr. Who in his telephone booth: there was no telling where we would end up, except that wherever it was, it would be in our little brick house.

And if we were in our little house, we were probably in the little kitchen, talking. Sometimes just talking, and sometimes talking things over.

My mother liked to talk about how she had met my father. He had been even shyer than she, so

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that she had had to propose to him. When he said yes and asked her to set the date, she said, "Two o'clock."

Their timing wasn't great. It was 1933. The Depression years burned away any vaguely romantic notions they may have had about life. And made them afraid—if they had not already been afraid. They lived in an unending expectation of catastrophe, to which my father's reaction, had he been free to have one on his own, would have been flight, and my mother's was fight.

It could sometimes be hard to get past her "tough talk." My father would simply let her go on. While she criticized whatever it was she was criticizing, he placed his fingers on the edge of the table, spreading them wide, the heels of his hands hanging over the edge, raising the knuckles so that the tips flattened out, then letting the heels of his hands fall again so that the fingers became as straight as clothespins. He used to do this as if he were studying his hands, or even admiring them. They were strong hands, flexible until he developed arthritis, unexpectedly large. Suddenly I saw him as he had been in 1933, matinee handsome, darkly intense, completely naive, and decked out in the wardrobe he'd acquired with his first paycheck—a white linen suit and yellow-and-white polka-dot bow tie with matching handkerchief protruding from the breast pocket.

As I stared at him, the green shirt and gray slacks reappeared and then re-metamorphosed into the white linen of yesteryear. It was confusing: his younger and older selves seemed to take turns appearing and disappearing like the images on the playing cards Tavy had at home, which were one thing when you held them at an angle and another when you held them straight up. I blinked my eyes to bring him into focus.

It occurred to me that this was more or less the way my father had always related to us: wavering in and out of focus.

I had a question I wanted to ask him. It seemed to me that it had to be a question that was on my parents' minds too—my mother's to ask, my father's to be asked—and yet no one had dared to bring it out into the open. I thought the time had come. "You know," I said, as a kind of prologue, "this was a family in which there were always a lot of secrets. Too many, if you ask me—"

"Ha," my mother said, interrupting triumphantly. "Nobody asked you."

"You've got ice cream on your top," my father said to her. He tore a paper towel off the roll and rubbed at the spot. (Paper towels had always been handy in this household, because my parents were always bringing up phlegm; stress and nicotine had undone their once-young bodies so!) "Pink becomes you, Ellie," he said.

"Ha."

She was going to start crying again, overcome by his compliment. I was determined not to be deflected. Into the space of that instant during which her mood was shifting, I rushed with my question. I asked my father if he had seen my brother "over there."

My father pushed his empty bowl away with a sudden show of revulsion, as if he wanted to disown the ice cream—or his love of it. He crossed his legs. He took off his glasses and squeezed and caressed his nose where they pinched and settled them back on his face. I remembered that on sunny days he used to wear tinted lenses that clicked onto these regular glasses, and when he didn't need them, he'd flick them up where they overhung his face like little dark-green awnings.

"No," he said.

We were silent, absorbing this news which wasn't really news since we'd half-known that if my father had seen him, he would already have said so, but which nevertheless seemed to increase in ontological stature by being spoken out loud. Then my mother said, "I was hoping that even if God had made the mistake of allowing evil on earth, He might have seen the error of His ways. But no, He had to go and create hell. What kind of God loves evil so much He can't get enough of it?"

"You're jumping to conclusions, El," my father said. "First of all, the fact that I haven't seen him does not necessarily mean that he's not there. Secondly, even if he's not there, it doesn't necessarily follow that there has to be a hell."

"Where else would he be?" I asked, taken aback by the brusque note in my own voice. I seemed to be saying that was where he belonged. Nina, I reminded myself, if you can't excuse even your own brother from hell, who's going to excuse you?

But then I thought, That's what we need a God for: to grant forgiveness where the rest of us can't quite manage it.

My father was saying to my mother, "Let's not beat around the bush here. The truth is, I never saw all that much of him when we were alive. I had to earn a living. I had to support us all. The result was, I never had time for him when he was little, and after he got bigger, he didn't want to have anything to do with me. He refused to believe that I had *wanted* to have more time with him. Well, if we didn't see each other on earth, there's really no reason for us to see each other now."

What he had just said was only partly true. My brother had had seven years of basking in the parental sunshine before I came along. But my attention had been flagged by something else he said. "Do you mean," I asked, finally registering what he'd said earlier about jumping to conclusions, "that you don't *know* whether there's a hell or not?"

"Of course I don't know. How could I know? Hell is about not-being, and as I've already explained, the whole idea of heaven is that it's about *being*. It's not about not-being. Being can't know nonbeing because it would entail a self-contradiction."

"Then let me ask you this," I said. "If being

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can't know nonbeing, how can goodness know sin, which is also a kind of absence since it means 'missing the mark'? And unless goodness can know sin, how can God know time?"

I was thinking that questions like these might have been why theologians had come up with notions like limbo and purgatory. Probably you went into that line of work out of a hunger for absolutes, an addiction to drawing dichotomies, but by the time you reached middle age, you felt surfeited, you were tired of your lifelong binge, and you began to develop a secret craving for what was relative, for the in-between, maybe even, at least on rare, indulgent occasions, for the indefensibly vague. Oh my God, maybe you became a closet Hegelian.

My father said, "You were always one for the questions, Nina."

"As long as we are on the subject of specific persons," my mother said, "I have a question." A kind of timidity invaded and softened her voice. "What about my mother?" she asked.

My father laughed. "How could St. Peter turn away someone who was buried wearing her Presbyterian pin for perfect attendance?"

"Is she happy?" my mother asked—and I knew she was holding her breath for the answer, though she had very little breath in her lungs that she could hold.

"She's with your father," my father said. This time, when he reached for a paper towel, it was to dry the tears on my mother's wrinkled face.

These nightly conversations were telling on my mother. In the morning, she looked haggard, the skin on her face not just passively sagging with age but *tugging* at her, trying to pull her down into old age and death. There was a tug of war going on, between her fighting spirit, which could not bear the thought of surrender, and a deep desire for peace. She had so little use for the world, and yet here she was, syllogistically obligated, by her own sense of herself as someone whose essential nature it was to oppose, to side with the world, opposing death. She was a lover of abstraction now having to align herself with the world of physicality *against* abstraction. This battle was being fought daily, even while she was talking with my father. He drew her to him by his physical magnetism, but he himself—being a ghost—was an abstraction. These contrary vectors were exhausting her; they seemed almost to generate a friction that was wearing her down. Day by day, she seemed less *there*. Her bones were shrinking away from her skin, as if she were getting ready to molt. As for flesh, there was hardly any left. Just the dress of skin over the sewing form of her skeleton.

From lavender kimono to pink sweatsuit with a pale blue bunny: this was the *haute couture* of a life, the sartorial arc of her passage on earth.

It was high summer. The neighbors to our left had gone to Spain; the neighbors to our right, the Woodbines, were in Florida (which Mrs. Woodbine, who had traveled the world over, insisted was the place on earth she found most different from England, more "exotic," she said, than Turkey, or Egypt, or even Sri Lanka). Malcolm and his wife had sent us a postcard from Devon, where they were walking twenty miles a day. The neighborhood was like a ghost town, and would have been even without my father's nocturnal visitations. Even when the ice-cream man came in his truck, the bell as clear and cool as an ice cube in the sweet lemonade of daytime, only one or two children dashed out from their houses, ten pence in their palms.

Some mornings we sat out on the patio, my mother wrapped in blankets, her face turned toward the sun, Tavy digging in the stone-potted geraniums, Oscar snoozing, the extravagant curlicue of his tail a kind of cadenza to the theme of his body, bluebirds and swallows threading their song through the bright seam of day. Butterflies floated on currents of air so light they were imperceptible—a phenomenon we knew existed, from the evidence of the butterflies, but which was inaccessible to our senses. My mother slept. For a few minutes, I felt as if time had stopped. Then a shadow passed over the sundial of mother's face as if to remind me what time it was—and what time was—but nothing else moved except the butterflies with their delicate, soundless bobbing, Tavy's busy little wrist and spoon, and Oscar's twitching tail. Far off, an airplane homed in on Heathrow, but from where I sat, it seemed more like a bee making for its hive. I had the sense that I was intimately familiar with this scene. Not that I had experienced it before in exactly this way, but that I had been somehow prepared for it, perhaps *had* experienced it before but from a slightly different perspective, perhaps my mother's or Tavy's or that of someone who wasn't with us now.

Maybe time, I thought, was like light and functioned sometimes as waves, sometimes as particles. Maybe some of the time it flowed from past to future (or, as Augustine thought, from future to past), but maybe at other times it bunched itself up into a lot of not-quite-infinitesimal quantum-like balls, bouncing around like crazy, some kind of pinball machine, the universe a penny arcade, somebody—who?—racking up one hell of a score.

It was so strange, living through these weeks during which my mother grew ever more contingent and delicate, almost, in a sense, younger, because her mind, while retaining its wizardly sharpness, was relinquishing its scope, narrowing the range of its interests to concentrate on the one central fact of existence, the self, while my daughter, my mother's great-granddaughter, blossomed like some sort of small,

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rustling bush, progressing from toddlerhood to little-girlhood.

Tavy was walking with assurance now. Instead of looking always as if she was just about to trip, or as if she thought the world was not merely round but about to spin out of control, she raced through the house as if she were training for the four-minute mile. "Who's got happy feet?" I'd say, and she'd break into a silly dance and collapse giggling. For a moment, I felt redeemed: I was a good mother and I had a happy child. So what if she had sneaked into Malcolm's kitchen when his back was turned—he had been babysitting her for the day, giving my mother a breather from the commotion Tavy couldn't help creating—and grabbed his jar of pickled walnuts, expensively sold at Harrod's, and carried them outside to feed to the squirrels, turning them all into baffled gourmets?

But it was hard on my mother, all this energy, this top wound up at birth and set to whirligig her way through a long, probably headlong, life. I suggested to her that we should leave, but she wouldn't have it. She knew what was coming and didn't want to face it alone. She had panic attacks that she wanted me to be there to see her through. When people have panic attacks, they feel as though they can't breathe, but I think it was *because* my mother couldn't breathe that she had panic attacks. When you have emphysema, there are times when no matter how hard you try to breathe, no matter how much air you manage to suck in, it seems to do no good because there aren't enough air sacs left in your lungs to hold the air. You try to breathe, you make the motions of breathing, but you still don't have any breath. Some stony gargoyle is squatting on your lungs. Some mysterious statue has been planted right in the center of your chest, and the intricately branched bronchioles beneath won't grow, the bellows won't blow. It's like being suffocated from the inside.

I fixed her a supper of peaches and cream. It was one of the few things she'd eat, though even with this, the bowl would be on the floor for Oscar before she'd finished half of it. I sat beside her, a human vending machine for Kleenex, paper towels, cortisone pills, blood-thinner pills, laxatives, cigarettes, matches, chocolate. We were deep into summer, having left a trail of shiny litter, but it was a trail which would never lead us out again. The leaves on the old oak tree were a restful, sleepy green, as if they'd manufactured all the chlorophyll they needed and could now relax.

Under the high hedge, a hedgehog rolled itself into a prickly ball at Oscar's approach.

My mother asked me to plump up the pillows behind her back. Her legs, under the blanket, were so pathetically thin that they seemed to me to be, as she never was, apologetic. They seemed to want to apologize for being helpless, and I would have patted them in the reassuring way that you pat children or pets, except that the cortisone my mother took made her skin so thin that it tore like tissue paper, you could punch holes in it with your fingers.

Sometimes, at night, or in the early morning when the tree and sky and the chimney across the way that topped the tall fence at the end of the lawn presented themselves in the frame of the window like a painting, lying in my father's bed I cried, not knowing what else to do. I cried quietly so I wouldn't wake Tavy or get my mother's broom handle going. To cry in front of my mother would have been, somehow, to steal the limelight from her, since this was her tragedy, not mine; and I didn't want Tavy to see me cry, because it might make her feel insecure. So I kept my crying a secret from both of them, but I couldn't keep it a secret from Oscar.

Oscar came into my room, curious and wanting breakfast, and jumped on the bed. He put his face next to mine as if to ascertain that what I was doing was, in fact, crying, and then he sat down next to my face and simply watched me until I stopped. I don't mean to hurt your feelings, I whispered to him, but you're my mother's dog, and Blaze is in heaven with my father, and I miss my dog, who is in America. I felt such a wave of longing for my own little dog, who had been through so much with me, and who would soon be the only creature left on earth who knew who *I* was, who had experienced what I had experienced in the past eventful decade. Not even Tavy knew me the way my dog did. I was so tired of trying to understand what everyone else needed—I wanted someone who understood me.

Oscar was unmoved. When I still didn't get out of bed, he sat on my chest, his plumy tail feather-dusting my teary face, blocking my view. I got up, crawling into a pair of jeans and one of my father's shirts. I had always thought it would be creepy to wear a dead person's clothes, but now I found it comforted me. It made me feel close to him.

On the way downstairs, I peeked into Tavy's room. She was still asleep on the cot in the room that was my mother's office. The sun had crossed the windowsill and highlighted the open book of her face. She had her thumb in her mouth. She liked to pick a piece of fuzz from the lightweight summer blanket, stick it on the knuckle of her index finger and then suck her thumb. It was a kind of padding, I guess, designed to prevent her knuckle from irritating the tip of her nose. I laughed at the thought of such a sensitive little nose.

Through depths of dreams, she felt my presence. She stirred, kicking at the sheets and blanket. She opened her eyes, in which I was afraid to read how much she knew: I did not want to know if she knew that to the extent to which I was my mother's daughter, I was not free to be my daughter's mother. The sunlight shining on her face

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seemed, rather, to be radiated by it, every strand of her hair gleaming, streaming into rays. She held open her arms and I reached toward her, leaned into her. I sat on the bed, squashing Teddy, and picked her up and held her, held her tight.

Oscar, his tail as erect and sweeping and haughty as the Arc de Triomphe, posed at the doorjamb, facing into the hallway, poised for the trip downstairs.

IT BEGAN as an ordinary day, a day like any other: breakfast for all, the toothbrush tray and a sponge bath for my mother, the *News at One*. In the afternoon, I read to my mother from *Wuthering Heights*, and Tavy listened while she colored in her coloring book. After supper, after the evening news, I took Tavy upstairs and put her to bed with Teddy, and my mother and I talked for a while in the living room. Then I put her to bed. She could no longer traverse the distance between the wing chair in the living room and the cot in the dining room even with the walker. I tucked her in, brought her a glass of water. "Is there anything else I can get you before I go up?" I asked.

"Do you think he'll come tonight?"

"If you want him to," I said.

"I don't want to die alone."

She had never come flat out and said that before. It gave me the willies. "Why are you talking about death?" I said. "Dinner wasn't that bad." I had fixed her a soft-boiled egg but burned the toast.

"Will you stay down here tonight?"

Oscar was curled up on the pillow, on top of her head like a golden crown. She looked so small, so vulnerable. Her cloudy eyes were like leaded window panes. She was a little house that everyone had moved away from. "I'll sleep on the couch in the living room," I offered.

"If you hear Daddy, please wake me up."

"I promise," I said.

In the living room, I lay down on the couch, still in my clothes. Then, like a victim of carbon monoxide poisoning, I fell into a colorless, odorless sleep.

WHEN I heard him in the kitchen, I rolled off the couch and went in through the foyer, trying not to wake my mother.

He was so handsome—he looked the way he had looked in his youth, dark and quiet and earnest and dedicated, a man who, though he was much too Protestantly reserved ever to talk about his beliefs, thought that there had to be a God and that it was clearly a God who loved him, the proof being that He had let him be born after Beethoven, which meant he could spend his life playing Beethoven string quartets. This was the greatest miracle of my father's life and he never ceased to be wholly thankful for it.

I simply could not understand how he could now be content merely to *be* a string quartet or even string-quartet-playing. Why, he had never even wanted to *be* Beethoven—that was a hubristic ambition his daughter might plead guilty to, but all he had ever wanted was to *play* Beethoven. "You *must* miss playing the violin," I said, desperately wanting him to be what, who, he was. Himself—not an idea or a predicate, even an eternal one. *Himself.*

"It's like I told you, Nina," he said, patient with my impatience. "My intonation has just gone all to hell without your mother around to criticize me."

Then it was clear to me, what he was saying. "No," I said.

"Yes," he said.

I felt cold. I felt as if I'd just been pulled, dazed and trembling, from an icy pond into which I had stupidly, *stupidly* stumbled. I was shivering with realization. I wanted to un-realize what I had realized. Maybe if I didn't know what was going to happen, I thought, it wouldn't happen. It would be the reverse of predestination.

"There are solo sonatas," I said. "There are records with one part missing. When Mother was busy, you used to practice by yourself. I stayed in my room, listening. In the hallway, listening. For years. In the end, you said, every member of a string quartet is responsible for himself. Or herself. Nobody can play your part for you."

"That's right," he said. "That's the first thing you learn when you shut the door to the practice room and start to play scales, for the first time. It's like anything else that matters. Nobody else can do it for you."

"I don't know if I agree with that," I said. "When you played the violin, when Mother played, it was like my heart was playing its own chamber music. I mean, I have always applauded you both. I hope you know that."

"Thank you," he said. And I realized that I had stumbled into the same pond all over again and that, no matter how I tried to circumvent it, that pond would always be there, waiting for me to fall into it and surface shivering and forever changed. My father's formal thank-you had signaled the fact that we had come to the end of something, but I still didn't want it to be over. I was an audience clamoring for an encore, while the musicians backstage just wanted to put their instruments away and go home. "Will you wake her?" he asked.

I hesitated. "Do I have to?"

"I'm here because she didn't want to do this alone."

"But you just said everything that matters has to be done alone!" I was still the star pupil, aggressively blasting holes in everyone else's argument so no one could draw a bead on mine.

"Death *can't* matter," he rebutted me, "because it *isn't* matter. Life matters, but death doesn't. Please bring her in here."

He had become so commanding—a presence, in spite of his nonexistence. He was more real to me, at that moment, than he had been since I was a child, an infant even.

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I remembered that I had seen him naked once, not so many years ago. He had talced himself after a tub bath and was drying himself off with a large towel. He had looked so pale, from the talc, almost snow-white, and yet so—*embodied*. That was how he looked now: pale as a ghost but embodied.

When I had seen him like that, naked, I'd ducked into the next room, not wanting him to know, not wanting to embarrass him. I ducked into the next room now.

"HE'S HERE?" She said the words as soon as I touched her shoulder. She raised herself off the pillows. Her hair, tousled from sleeping, was sticking out in wispy white corkscrews. It looked like smoke, as if her scalp were smoldering. Or like fog—the white, twisted columns of fog that drift silently through bayous.

"He wants to talk with you," I said.

"He's come for me."

"I don't know what you mean!" I cried.

"You know perfectly well what I mean, Nina. Don't be an ass about this."

"It's hard on her, Eleanor," my father said, as we pushed through the swinging Dutch gate into the kitchen.

"It's harder on me." She sank into her chair. "Nina, fix us some ice cream, if you don't mind."

I got the glass bowls from the cabinet and spoons and scooped up four dishes of ice cream, placing one on the floor for Oscar in case he decided he liked Rum Raisin, but he refused to come into the kitchen, He stayed by the gate, inscrutable as the Dalai Lama.

Because it was night, because my mother was old and cold, the furnace was on. We three were held in the kitchen as in an embrace.

I forced myself to eat the ice cream because my parents obviously wanted me to. They wanted to think I was happy, they wanted to be released from all guilt, freed of all anxiety. There was nothing new in that—but how could I be happy when they were leaving me? How was I supposed to feel good about what was happening? I didn't have my mother's ability to detach herself from sentiment. I didn't have my father's humility, which had allowed him to be grateful for even the smallest favor from God, such as being born after Beethoven.

Instead, I was angry. I felt they had played a dirty, rotten trick on me. They had let me think that my father had come back because he was lonely and missed my mother, but he had come back to take her away.

I felt a despair that was like amputation. I had thought I was helping her—talking with her, reading to her, looking after her wants and needs. But what she needed was to cut off life. She was gangrenous with the past—maybe that's how we all become. To get well, she needed to be freed from it. I was the amputated appendage.

Nothing I had done had been enough to keep her from being lonely and missing my father.

They handed me their empty bowls and I ran water over the dishes in the sink. When I turned around again, my father was helping my mother out of her chair.

"You're not going already!"

It came out like a scream, a sort of scream or controlled shriek. I was afraid I had waked up Tavy. We stopped and listened to the house, but she slept on.

"Remember," my father said. "Violin lessons as soon as you get back to Wisconsin."

I nodded. My eyes were filling.

"Don't cry," my mother said. "It disgusts me to see anyone cry. Besides, I'm happy to be with your father again."

And how happy she looked! She was as radiant as a bride, she was a bride. The smoothly rolling balls on the great pool table of time had arranged themselves in a new, or old, configuration, and before my eyes, she had become again the vibrant young beauty who had liked to stroll along the Gulf shore and dance late into the salt-scented, breeze-blown nights. She was again the clear-eyed, firm-profiled young woman who, to my father's amazement, shared his love of the Beethoven string quartets. Who would have thought that there could be a girl like this, or that she would be waiting for him? When he had finally accepted this as yet another miracle he had no choice but to believe in, he gathered up his courage and drove to Gulfport, in a Buick he'd bought for 75 bucks at a bankruptcy sale. It was, as I said, 1933.

But now my father had picked up my mother and carried her in his arms to the door to the back yard. "Open the door, Nina," he said.

I dried my hands on my shirt—his shirt—and went to the door. Outside, the leaves of the oak tree were like hands, all playing the sky as if the sky were a musical instrument, the wind an invisible bow. I unlatched the latch, unbolted the bolts, unlocked the key-lock.

"Stand over there, Nina," my father ordered, jerking his head in the direction of the little table he had made, the two chairs and the high stool.

I moved over to the table.

"Good-bye," said my mother. "I know you're determined to be a better mother than I was, but that may not be as easy as you think. In any case, you must not let Tavy keep you from your work. Make sure you get a decent price on the house. Vote Labor."

"Good-bye," said my father. "I'm sorry if you think I didn't love you enough, but I always had my hands full with your mother. So you see," he added, grasping her tightly, "nothing is any different from the way it's always been. Do you understand?"

My mother had her arms wrapped around my father's neck, and they were smiling into each other's young face.

She laughed.

And then my father carried my mother over the threshold of this world into the next.

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CNN vs. Israel

Andrea Levin

Television viewers with any awareness of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict have become accustomed to seeing it misrepresented by inaccurate reporting and distorted images which convey the impression that Israel is at once the oppressor of blameless Arabs, the major obstacle to regional, if not indeed world, peace, and the insatiable and arrogant recipient of unprecedented American largesse. Yet even some of the most jaded of such viewers were shocked by a program entitled *The Israeli Connection* which first ran on CNN on April 20, 1991 and was subsequently rebroadcast over and over again.

This program, produced by CNN's Special Assignment Unit, and running nearly a full half-hour, purports to examine the "extraordinary relationship" between the United States and Israel since 1948. Instead, it expounds what can only be described as an Arab propagandist's view of the salient issues.

"Tension" between the United States and Israel is the leitmotif of the piece—tension repeatedly said to result in the post-Gulf War era from increasing American disapproval of Israel's dereliction in the peace process, repression of the Palestinians, and inordinate financial demands. At the outset the CNN reporter, Mark Feldstein (whose observations were written in collaboration with the producer, Kathy Slobogin), tells the viewer:

> Until now, the United States and Israel have maintained their unique alliance. Israel has received billions of dollars in aid, and has wielded an influence over Congressmen and Presidents enjoyed by no other nation. The [Gulf] war drew the two countries closer together against a common enemy, but now that enemy has retreated and formerly unthinkable questions are beginning to emerge. With its new ties to the Arab states, can the U.S. continue to tolerate Israel's hard line in this search for peace? Does the relationship still serve American interests?

The unabashedly hostile editorializing in these opening comments is striking. Whether Israel is "hard line in this search for peace" is not a question to be explored; it is a statement uttered as factual background to the ensuing interviews, with "hardline" understood to be a negative and reprehensible posture. The reference to billions of dollars given Israel is not qualified by noting either the urgent security concerns prompting aid requests or the reciprocal benefits Israel provides America as an ally and friend, benefits consistently attested to by myriad American political and military leaders. Nor is any mention made of intransigent Arab rejectionism toward Israel.

As at the beginning, so at the end of the program, Israel and Israel alone is held responsible by Feldstein for the lack of movement on peace, for regional instability, and for the endangering of its friendship with the United States:

> The Gulf conflict is over now, but another, older conflict remains. For 43 years, the special relationship between Israel and the United States has endured, but how much longer it will do so may well depend on Israel's willingness to do what it has so far refused: change the status quo. Until that happens, the aftermath of this war may only be a prelude to the next.

Omitted is the refusal of the Arab states (with the sole exception of Egypt) to recognize Israel's right to exist; omitted is Arab sponsorship of terrorism against Israel; omitted are all the calls by Israel for negotiations and a changing of the status quo before 1967 and even more afterward; omitted is the alacrity with which Israel changed the status quo when Egypt's President Anwar Sadat offered peace.

In building the case that Israel bears all blame, CNN traces a lamentable and longstanding pattern of malfeasance on the part of the Jewish state vis-à-vis its Arab neighbors. Even the flight of Holocaust survivors to Mandatory Palestine is treated as a provocation:

> But Israel had to fight to survive, attacked by Arabs who had lived there for centuries who resented the new wave of Jews.

This is a particularly insidious distortion of the historical record. There is not so much as a hint here that at the moment of its birth Israel was attacked not just by Arabs resident in the newly-founded state, but by armies from six Arab nations: Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the second phrase of the statement sows the notion of dispossession by the Jews: if Arabs attacked, it was because they had lived for centuries there and were being usurped. Not at this point and not at any other in the program does the reporter tell the audience that Jews have lived in Israel continuously for more than 3,000 years, and that in Jerusalem in particular, in every census taken in

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recent centuries, Jews were either a plurality or an outright majority.

Feldstein also neglects to inform his viewers that the Arab population declined under Ottoman misrule, as many fled the poverty and banditry in what is now Israel. He does not explain that a great inmigration of Arabs and other Muslims (from all parts of the Turkish empire, North Africa, Persia, and the Balkans) occurred later, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and that it was largely stimulated by the economic improvements and opportunities wrought by Zionism. He leaves the impression that, while suffering Jews may have flocked to refuge in Mandatory Palestine at the time of World War II, Arabs, who alone were native to the area, were understandably opposed—and provoked.

Feldstein reinforces the theme of Israel's culpability in a misleading characterization of the aftermath of the Six-Day War:

> But there was another bitter legacy of Israel's victory: the fate of Palestinians living on land Israel had captured—the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights. Israeli occupation became a wedge in the special relationship, the first crack in America's moral commitment to Israel.

Never having informed his viewers that the Six-Day War was prompted by aggressive Arab military moves accompanied by threats to "drive the Jews into the sea," Feldstein implies that the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights was a moral error and a source of conflict with the United States, with the suggestion that Israel had workable alternatives. In reality, the U.S. recognized the defensive posture of Israel in occupying the territories and accepted the position (spelled out in UN Resolution 242) that Israel should hold onto them until the Arabs were prepared to make peace.

Camp David prompts yet another mischaracterization of the historical record. Feldstein:

> In 1978, President Carter finally broke through the Arab-Israeli deadlock. The Camp David accord brought peace between Israel and Egypt. It also held the promise of progress on Palestinian autonomy. The cost to the U.S.: a $3 billion bonus to Israel, $2 billion to Egypt. To this day Camp David remains the last major breakthrough in the search for peace in the Middle East. The promise of progress for the Palestinians was never met, and the tension between the U.S. and Israel never resolved.

In Feldstein's version, all credit is due President Carter and the United States, with Israel simply garnering a financial windfall while at the same time exacerbating tensions in refusing to deliver "progress for the Palestinians."

But here again essential points are omitted: first, that Camp David's success hinged fundamentally on Israel's action in relinquishing to Egypt 90 percent of the land taken in the Six-Day War, including oil fields and air bases, land which had for twenty years been used by Egypt as military zones and staging areas for attacks on Israel; and second, that the so-called "bonus" to Israel was funding to help defray the costs of withdrawal from the Sinai and the repositioning of forces in the Negev. Furthermore, though the United States offered the assistance in outright grants, Prime Minister Menachem Begin insisted on Israel's repaying it.

The CNN commentary also excludes the Palestinians' rejection of the Camp David accords, their renunciation of Sadat, and their rejoicing when he was later assassinated.

One more variation on the theme that Israel's handling of the Palestinians has made it seem "a nation of oppressors" is Feldstein's allusion to the Sabra and Shatila massacre:

> Hundreds of Palestinian women and children were massacred by Lebanese militiamen with the complicity of the Israel army.

This reckless description is wrong on two counts. To begin with, the overwhelming majority of the dead were male (of 460, 35 were women and children), and they included Lebanese, Syrians, Iranians, Pakistanis, and Algerians, as well as Palestinians. Secondly, the Kahan commission, established by Israel to investigate, found evidence of negligence by Israel in not anticipating and acting to forestall revenge killings by Christians against Muslims, but no evidence supporting the very different charge of "complicity."

If Feldstein and his co-authors were truly concerned about the welfare of Palestinians and with providing an accurate picture of the region, they might have commented on the irony that many more Palestinians and Lebanese have since massacred one another in these very same camps, with little coverage by the media or attention from other nations.

AIDING and abetting Feldstein in drawing up his relentless indictment of Israel are the "experts" he chooses to interview. One of them, former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Robert Neumann, blames Israel not only for the Palestinian problem, but for the instability of Arab regimes:

> If nothing happens, if the Palestinian people continue to get more and more desperate, then every Arab regime, those on our side particularly, will be undermined.

Graham Fuller, identified as a senior Middle East analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency, endorses the same notions:

> The longer we're associated, directly or indirectly, with an intransigent Israeli approach to the Palestinian problem, the less effective we are going to be in the Middle East.

The CNN reporter lets these charges stand without a single challenging question. Hence viewers are not reminded that addressing the Palestinian problem will not in any way address the real destabilizing factors in the region: authoritarian, semi-feudal dictatorships; widespread poverty; rampant Arab human-rights abuses; crushing population growth; religious intolerance; and so on. Nor are characterizations of Israel as "intransigent" offset either by a more balanced look at Israel's con-

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cerns or by reminders of the intractable positions of Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the PLO.*

TO ENDORSE his allegation that "Israel's commitment to democracy has come into question," and that there has been a "shift in its moral standing," Feldstein turns to Charles Percy, identified as the "former Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman" and "a critic of U.S. policy toward Israel." But "critic" does not quite define Percy's frequently expressed and venomous attitudes toward Israel, and certainly does not convey the focus of the ex-Senator's Arab-centered activities. Ironically, while it is Percy's contention that Israel promotes its own interests to the detriment of the United States, his own unswerving agenda seems singularly guided by allegiance to Arab interests. For Percy is, if not an actual lobbyist for the Arabs, heavily involved in advocacy of Arab interests. He sits on the board of the American-Arab Affairs Council, to which he is also a contributor. He is chairman of the board and president of the Hariri Foundation USA, which he co-founded with a Saudi financier. He holds an advisory-council position in the Arab-American Business and Professional Association.

From this uniquely objective vantage point, Percy declares:

> How can you say, "Well, let's support Israel because they're a democracy" when there is no democracy for two million Palestinians under their control in the occupied territories.

Needless to say, Feldstein does not interject relevant observations for his audience, such as that any change in the status of the territories requires, according to UN Resolutions 242 and 338, steps by Arab states toward peace, not unilateral action by Israel. Nor does Feldstein remind his viewers that bringing full "democracy" to the territories—that is, giving the occupants of the territories the political rights of Israeli citizens—would involve Israeli annexation of those territories, a move overwhelmingly opposed by the Palestinians and the international community, as well as by the vast majority of Israelis.

Professor Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard, another inveterate "critic" of Israel, is also heard on the morality question. In response to Feldstein's depiction of the *intifada*—"So far Israeli soldiers have killed more than 700 Palestinians. Thousands more have been wounded. Has Israel now forfeited its moral high ground?"—Hoffmann says:

> I'm afraid Israel has become what it certainly did not want to be, which is an ordinary nation. Ordinary nations use force to preserve positions. In the long run, occupying a territory whose population does not want to be occupied is a very corrosive and morally dangerous thing to do.

As before, the charge is leveled that Israel, the occupier, has made immoral choices, and summoned to testify are those individuals with long records of hostility toward the Jewish state.

These same speakers argue that Israel has become a political liability to the United States due to its intransigence in the peace process and that its American supporters, especially the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), are a detriment to this country. George Ball, identified as a former presidential adviser and a "sharp critic of the pro-Israel lobby," is brought in to charge: "They're effective in a very narrow way, a way that pays no attention to the larger interest of the United States."

Ball, it should be remembered, is a man whose thinking on the subject of Israel borders consistently on the irrational. For example, in a recent op-ed column in the Boston *Globe*, he strongly urged the U.S. to curb arms sales to Middle East countries in the post-Gulf War era, while simultaneously castigating AIPAC for opposing arms sales to Saudi Arabia. The only operative logic in this position is an abiding animosity toward Israel. In 1985—to cite only one of many hysterical accusations Ball has hurled over the years—he held Israel singlehandedly responsible for undermining America's ability to bring about world peace: "The pro-Israel U.S. policy in the Middle East [has been] the reason behind the steady deterioration of the American role in leading the world toward peace."

TO BE SURE, in a show of balance, Feldstein does interview spokesmen sympathetic to Israel. Yet with a single exception, they are not allowed to respond to the sweeping charges leveled against Israel by Feldstein himself or his other guests. Congressman Charles Schumer's excerpt focuses on the lack of positive feeling for Israel within the present administration; the historian Howard Sachar dwells on how much better relations with Israel were in the past; Henry Kissinger reminisces about his shuttle diplomacy as Secretary of State; Abba Eban's contribution is a vignette about his emotion at the founding of Israel.

The exception is Steven Spiegel of UCLA, who is given three sentences to rebut the allegation that Israel is now a political liability to the United States:

> Many people talk about how Israel's on the sidelines, but the

* An even more incredible version of the myth that the Palestinian problem is the main source of instability in the region was purveyed by ABC's popular anchorman, Peter Jennings, on *World News Tonight* (December 12, 1990), where he explained to millions of viewers that "Defeating Iraq does not solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem, which already destabilizes the whole region." Thus, in the midst of a massive inter-Arab conflict, triggering the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Egyptians, Jordanians, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, Kuwaitis, Yemenis, Palestinians, Europeans, and Americans, provoking global upheaval in economic markets, forcing the mobilization of an unprecedented multinational military force at a cost of billions of dollars, and entailing unknown numbers of potential war casualties, Jennings wanted his public to believe that the Israeli-Palestinian issue was the real source of trouble in the Arab world. Nor did he serve his viewers honestly in alleging that that issue was, even prior to the Gulf crisis, the root of instability. In the past four decades more than a dozen inter-Arab conflicts, none of which involved Israel, have cost at least two million casualties. Were Israel to vanish off the map, inter-Arab violence would continue unabated.

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> Israelis are critical to the United States. Number one, they're our, kind of, reserve quarterback—they're there. And the most important factor is that Israel is an island of democracy and stability in a highly unstable region.

But Feldstein immediately challenges Spiegel's assertion, something he does at no time in reaction to any criticism of Israel.

This points to the foremost problem in programs like *The Israeli Connection*, which is the partisan role of the reporter, who functions as something akin to a prosecutor in a kangaroo court, backed up by known adversaries of the defendant. Feldstein's commentary suggests a calculated effort to advance a political agenda, even at the cost of subverting the professional integrity of the network.

Indeed, *The Israeli Connection* presents not just snippets of inaccurate history and disparate allegations by public figures, but a fully coherent landscape of falsehood. In this portrayal, Israel formerly elicited sympathy because of the Holocaust, but no longer. For it has now been unmasked as a nation of morally corrupt occupiers, having first displaced the original inhabitants of Palestine and then expanded into the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem. It is intransigent and defiant toward its American benefactor; it operates manipulatively within the American political system through its supporters. In this landscape, there is no Arab terrorism, no Arab rejectionism, no Arab boycott, no Arab anti-Semitism, no Arab despotism, no Arab intolerance of any non-Arab or non-Muslim group in what is considered the pan-Arab domain, whether that group be Jews, Kurds, Christians, Druze, blacks, or Berbers.

BUT does it all really matter? How much damage is done by programs like *The Israeli Connection* to public understanding of Middle East realities?

Some argue that the judgment of the American public is fundamentally astute and that those viewers who follow the Middle East will recognize the claptrap of trendy dogma, error, and exaggeration and will understand the real issues well enough. According to this thinking, the steady stream of distorted information on commercial and public networks as well as in the print media is negligible in its impact on people's perceptions and is offset by a sufficient quantity of accurate information. The same thinking would have it that while the cause of the Palestinians, if not the Arabs in general, may have impressed itself sympathetically upon many Americans, the deep bond with Israel is unshakably sound.

Such an assessment may have served in the past, during periods of less intense and less distorted coverage, but it overlooks the almost inevitably cumulative effect of misinformation on public perception and sentiment (which ultimately shape public policy). Moreover, the powerful effects of continual media bias must be considered in the context of disturbing trends in other sectors of the society. The egregious anti-Israel bias in popular magazines, student texts, professional journals, campus newspapers, and many other publications reinforces the drumbeat of coverage in the mass media.

The Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, asserts in its Code of Ethics: "We believe in public enlightenment as the forerunner of justice." In their tendentious and fallacious coverage, their dereliction of responsibility to serve public enlightenment, *The Israeli Connection*, and the many other programs like it, ultimately thwart the development of informed policies and the pursuit of justice in the Middle East.

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PC & the Ellis Affair

Carol Iannone

When word started getting around late last year that upper-echelon executives at Simon & Schuster and its parent company, Paramount Communications, were canceling the publication of Bret Easton Ellis's third novel, *American Psycho*,* after learning that it was filled with horrendously explicit scenes of sexual torture and dismemberment, it seemed for a moment that we were in for another series of lectures from our elites on the stern imperatives of artistic freedom. "A black day for American publishing," cried the Authors Guild.

Yet it was not long before it became clear that something altogether different was astir in the life of the culture. How had Simon & Schuster's hierarchy been alerted to *American Psycho* in the first place? From, it turned out, articles in the press by writers who had seen the circulating galley proofs and been appalled by them. These early pieces in *Time* and *Spy* were soon joined by a chorus of pre-publication denunciations in such places as *Newsweek*, the Washington *Post*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and the New York *Times*. And since its release in March—the novel having been snapped up by Random House, an even more prestigious publisher than Simon & Schuster—not only have feminist groups run a determined boycott of *American Psycho*, but it has received widespread critical condemnation, even from Norman Mailer, reigning champion of extreme experience and the author of a novel, *An American Dream*, that may have received tribute in the title of Ellis's book.

What accounted for this unusual behavior? After all, only a few months earlier, during the uproar over government funding of the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe, we had all been instructed on the artist's absolute right to express himself freely in whatsoever manner he wished. If we did not like Mapplethorpe's photographs, we did not have to look at them, did we? One might have expected that this attitude of each-to-his-own would apply even more to a book, with its contents between closed covers, than to an exhibit mounted on the walls of a big-city museum. Yet suddenly the doctrine of absolute aesthetic freedom was taking a beating. "Standards, anyone?" Roger Rosenblatt asked at the end of his piece in the New York *Times Book Review*, apparently undeterred by fear of the automatic retort that had for so long followed even the tentative pronunciation of so much as the first syllable of that word: *Whose* standards? Who is to decide?

Granted, there was some confusion among Ellis's critics about whether his book was offensive on moral or on aesthetic grounds. Half the time it was denounced for what was in it, the other half for how badly it was done. Tammy Bruce, president of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), asserted, "This is not art." But if it were, would "those" scenes be acceptable to her, or did she mean to suggest that such depictions could not, by definition, be art?

In the meantime, Ellis himself was playing all sides of the question. In a Sunday New York *Times* piece that appeared some months before his novel was published, he remarked that American society in general, and his own twentysomething generation in particular, were "basically unshockable"—hence the need to render an extreme portrayal of violence. Indeed, the indifference of society to the moral nihilism of the young was a set theme in his much-acclaimed first novel, *Less Than Zero* (1985), which concerns a group of young and overprivileged Los Angelenos spinning aimlessly in a void of utter permissiveness.

As often happens with artists who set out to shock society, however, when society started to register the presumably hoped-for shock waves Ellis ran for cover. The reaction to his book, he orated, "reflects the intolerance of our culture to deal with anything that falls outside the acceptable." The twist in this case was that the "culture" being intolerant of him consisted not just of the stereotypical Yahoos of the Right, always to be counted on to censor all that is daring and progressive and bold, but, as Ellis specifically complained, the "politically correct" crowd as well, with its peculiar sensitivity on the topic of women. Still another twist—a real complication, this—was that in many ways *American Psycho* is quite PC itself.

The novel's anti-hero, twenty-six-year-old Patrick Bateman, the character who commits the horrible murders described by Ellis in such grisly detail, is, in fact, an example of one of the most reviled figures of our age, the 1980's Wall Street yuppie. Moreover, he is clearly meant to embody Reaganite America gone amok, from the portrait of Oliver North that hangs in his

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* Vintage Contemporaries, 399 pp., $11.00.

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bedroom to his ruthless treatment of the pathetic homeless people who approach him, Dickenslike, as he leaves a restaurant after a three-figure meal. Although he is supposed to be a broker, we never see him broker anything, which is evidently part of the point; his six-figure salary from Pierce & Pierce is no more earned by him than is his large family inheritance.

Patrick spends most of his time tending to his appearance; his morning toilette makes the lazy hedonists of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* seem like bustling careerists by comparison. Between facials, massages, manicures, and picking designer clothes to wear to restaurants where he and those who pass for his friends and colleagues scream at each other uncomprehendingly over the din, he is one un-busy boy. While all of this is described in ludicrously overdone detail, it does represent an attempt by Ellis to convey something about the psychopathology that drives Patrick to hideous acts of sexual torture and humiliation, murder, even cannibalism. As Mailer, whose piece appeared in the March *Vanity Fair*, ponderously interprets it: "*American Psycho* is saying that the 80's were spiritually disgusting and the author's presentation is the crystallization of such horror."

With this thesis, of course, Mailer and the rest of the "politically correct" crowd could hardly agree more. Nevertheless, it was not enough to save Ellis from their disapprobation. There are perhaps two reasons for this: first, Ellis goes so far with the yuppie stuff that his novel is always threatening to turn into a satire not of Reaganite America but of people who hold such clichés about Reaganite America; and second, even a reader convinced that Ronald Reagan is the fount and focus of evil in the world may be hard put to add power-tool torture and sexual murder to his many crimes. Thus Alfred Kazin, a critic whose denunciations of Reagan and the Reagan era have rarely been equaled in their hysteria, protested in his review of *American Psycho*: "But really, Mr. Ellis goes too far. . . . [It] is finally difficult to be as indignant as he is about Patrick's poster of Oliver North, the *ninety* dollars gentlefolk pay for a pizza, or his cruelty to homeless people with dixie cup in hand." Mailer for his part does his best to "entertain the thesis that the unbridled manipulations of the money-decade subverted the young sufficiently to produce wholly aimless lives for a generation of Wall Street yuppies." But then he pulls back: "But was it crowned by the ultimate expression of all these meaningless lives—one total monster, a Patrick Bateman? Can he emerge entirely out of no more than vapidity, cupidity, and social meaninglessness?"

This astonishing admission—that there may be worse evils than those allegedly produced by Ronald Reagan—is followed by Mailer's almost Aristotelian analysis of the problem presented by Ellis's minute descriptions of horror. While he does not retract his own long-held insistence that the artist must be allowed—indeed encouraged—to explore forbidden territory, it does occur to Mailer that when a writer goes as far as Ellis, he ought to bring something back from the abyss:

> Since we are going to have a monstrous book with a monstrous thesis, the author must rise to the occasion by having a murderer with enough inner life for us to comprehend him. We pay a terrible price for reading about intimate violence—our fears are stirred, and buried savageries we do not wish to meet again in ourselves stir uneasily in the tombs to which we have consigned them. . . . If one is embarked on a novel that hopes to shake American society to the core, one has to have something new to say about the outer limits of the deranged—one cannot simply keep piling on more and more acts of machicolated butchery.

We should remember these points in future literary controversies. Suddenly, it seems, "standards" are not so impossibly difficult to invoke or define; suddenly, the encounter with the extreme in literature can have a corrupting effect on readers; suddenly, freedom of expression is not an absolute.

Mailer is certainly right that the brutal scenes in *American Psycho* are gratuitous, coarsening, horrific, absolutely unjustified. But if Ronald Reagan did not produce Patrick Bateman/*American Psycho*, what did? This novel, says Mailer, shows us "where the hands have come to on the clock." Where is that? An answer begins to peep obliquely out of Mailer's own ramblings on *American Psycho*, which, he worries, ends by making evil look banal rather than satanic. "For if Hannah Arendt is correct," he comments,

> and evil is banal, then that is vastly worse than the opposed possibility that evil is satanic. The extension of Arendt's thesis is that we are absurd, and God and the Devil do not wage war with each other over the human outcome. I would rather believe that the Holocaust was the worst defeat God ever suffered at the hands of the Devil. That thought offers more life than to assume that many of us are nothing but dangerous, distorted, and no damn good.

This may seem odd coming from the mother of all literary bad boys, yet it is true in a qualified but measurable way that over the decades Mailer's own flirtations with the abyss, with the void, with the forbidden, *have* been contingent upon some sense of a traditional moral universe as backdrop, whereas for Ellis such a backdrop seems to have all but completely collapsed. Why and how it collapsed is suggested in an epigraph by Miss Manners (Judith Martin) he has placed at the beginning of his novel:

> One of the places we went wrong was the naturalistic Rousseauean movement of the 60's in which people said, "Why can't you just say what's on your mind?" In civilization there have to be some restraints. If we followed every impulse, we'd be killing one another.

In one way or another, then, Ellis seems to have absorbed a sense of our age as one in which a deluded

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permissiveness has badly misread human nature and the contingencies surrounding the human condition. In this light, his caricature of Reaganite America becomes a mere epiphenomenon of a deeper cultural holocaust. Indeed, when Patrick Bateman speaks his mind, he invokes not the culture of Reagan, which for better or worse is only the culture of middle-class America, but rather a phantasmagoric, quintessentially postmodernist landscape from which all traditional structures, values, truths, have been eliminated:

> . . . where there was nature and earth, life and water, I saw a desert landscape that was unending, resembling some sort of crater, so devoid of reason and light and spirit that the mind could not grasp it on any sort of conscious level and if you came close the mind would reel backward, unable to take it in. It was a vision so clear and real and vital to me that in its purity it was almost abstract. This was what I could understand, this was how I lived my life, what I constructed my movement around, how I dealt with the tangible. This was the geography around which my reality revolved: it did not occur to me, *ever*, that people were good or that a man was capable of change or that the world could be a better place through one's taking pleasure in a feeling or a look or a gesture, of receiving another person's love or kindness. Nothing was affirmative, the term "generosity of spirit" applied to nothing, was a cliché, was some kind of bad joke. Sex is mathematics. Individuality no longer an issue. What does intelligence signify? Define reason. Desire—meaningless. Intellect is not a cure. Justice is dead. Fear, recrimination, innocence, sympathy, guilt, waste, failure, grief, were things, emotions, that no one really felt anymore. Reflection is useless, the world is senseless. Evil is its only permanence. God is not alive. Love cannot be trusted. Surface, surface, surface was all that anyone found meaning in . . . this was civilization as I saw it, colossal and jagged.

In the end, Patrick is trying to be stopped, hoping to be found out, literally screaming his confession at people who simply cannot take it in, who are, as the novel repeatedly emphasizes, obtusely unaware even that crimes have been committed, let alone being ready to place him under the slightest suspicion. In a deconstructed world of jagged surfaces, devoid of hierarchies of meaning, there are no depths to cry out of, and none to receive the cry.

I AM not suggesting that Ellis really means to say all this. In fact, the catastrophic inclusion of the now famous offensive scenes reveals a staggering aesthetic and moral immaturity that turns the novel into an example of the very disease it purports to diagnose. But just so, we should make no mistake as to what we are witnessing: a novel that both seeks to portray and at the same time is itself a manifestation of extreme cultural breakdown. As such it inadvertently forces a number of politically incorrect truths on our attention—that civilization does not cause barbarism, it controls it; that the weakening of civilized restraints does not mean the flowering of the individual but the rise of savagery; that when we deny the moral law, people will just go farther to hit bottom, to feel, if only negatively, the boundaries of their humanity.

In the meantime, Ellis's critics, despite all their new-found moral indignation—and welcome as that is—are still missing the point, refusing to see the connection between what they denounce in him and the cultural values they themselves usually celebrate and defend. As for Ellis himself, he is getting what he called for (which is not what he wanted): a boundary, a barrier, a point at which people will fight back. But alas for all of us that it has had to go so far.

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After the Cold War

AMERICA'S PURPOSE: NEW VISIONS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. Edited by OWEN HARRIES. *ICS Press. 175 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by NORMAN PODHORETZ

ABOUT two years ago, I was invited by Owen Harries, the editor of the *National Interest*, to contribute to a series of articles he was planning on the role of America in a post-cold-war world. After thinking about it long and hard, I finally declined, mainly because I had been unable to make up my mind as to what I thought America's purpose should be now that the threat of Communism, which had supplied the organizing principle of our foreign policy for more than four decades, had been decisively eliminated.

But quite apart from what I or anyone else thought America's purpose should or should not be, I was growing more and more convinced that the debate over intervention was becoming academic. As I then saw it, the traditional isolationism of the Right was beginning to resurface now that the threat of Communism had subsided, and would soon converge with the equally traditional isolationism of the Left which had already returned in full force as a result of Vietnam. Thus, the slogan of the McGovern presidential campaign of 1972, "Come Home, America," would find an echo and a reinforcement in the call already being issued by the conservative columnist Patrick J. Buchanan for a policy of "America First," and the two together would frustrate any interventionist ambitions, for whatever purpose, that George Bush or any other President might still entertain.

Well, as we know now, this analysis, though plausible enough, was entirely wrong. But then again, so were the analyses of the sixteen writers—all conservatives of one stripe or another—who did agree to write pieces for the *National Interest*. Those pieces have now been collected by Harries into a single volume entitled *America's Purpose: New Visions of U.S. Foreign Policy*, and reading them today makes for an entirely different experience from the one they provided in their original incarnations. Then they were in varying degrees stimulating and provocative; now they teach a cautionary lesson in intellectual humility.

For the plain truth is that nothing any of these sixteen intelligent and learned writers said, either in the way of prediction or advocacy, envisaged the possibility of the great event that was to occur on January 16, 1991.

To be sure, a number of them (Charles Krauthammer, Carl Gershman, and Ben J. Wattenberg) came out swinging for continued American interventionism. But the whole point of the interventionism they advocated was the Wilsonian one of making the world safe, or at any rate safer, for democracy—an issue which was present only very indirectly, if at all, in the Gulf crisis. Kuwait was not a democratic country when it was invaded by Iraq, and the United States did not go to war to turn it into one but only to liberate it from foreign occupation. Nor did we go to war to turn Iraq into a democracy, nor even, as it emerged, to depose Saddam Hussein. It is certainly true that the world was made safer for democracy by the frustration of his effort to seize control of a large share of the oil on which the West depends, but that was not the kind of thing the interventionists writing in the *National Interest* had in mind (though all of them did in the event support both Desert Shield and Desert Storm).

On the other end of the spectrum, the contributors to the *National Interest* series who veered more or less sharply toward the isolationist pole (Patrick J. Buchanan, Ted Galen Carpenter, and Nathan Glazer) could perhaps see consoling traces of isolationist influence in the haste with which Bush ended the war and in his refusal to assume any responsibility for reshaping the internal affairs of Iraq lest we sink into that "quagmire" which is their chief bogeyman. But this is surely cold comfort to a group which was so wrong about so many things, including its conviction that the American people would never tolerate the kind of action that 90 percent of the American people would soon wind up enthusiastically supporting in the Persian Gulf.

Much the same criticism can be made of those like Irving Kristol and Jeane J. Kirkpatrick who, trying to escape or transcend the interventionist-isolationist alternative, took refuge in the realist argument for a foreign policy based strictly on considerations of national interest. Thus, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, in a piece called "A Normal Country in a Normal Time," flatly declared:

> Our alliances should be alliances of equals, with equal risks, burdens, and responsibilities. It is time to give up the dubious benefits of superpower status and become again a usually successful, open American republic. . . . I believe these views are broadly shared by the majority of Americans.

Unlike the neoisolationists, however, Mrs. Kirkpatrick was not entirely sure that she was right in her belief that such views were shared by most Americans, and she immediately went on to add that "Should that not be the case, I would, of course, respect their decision." No wonder, then, that after beginning with reservations about George Bush's decision to send American forces to the Persian Gulf, she wound up supporting his decision to go to war.

As for Kristol, seeing Bush's policy as falling clearly within the national interest of the United States, he supported it without reservations from the beginning. Yet from his essay it would not have been easy to predict either that so massive an intervention would soon occur or, for that matter, that the American people (let alone

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Kristol himself) would be in favor of it.

WHAT then does the Gulf War and its aftermath reveal about the debates so vividly represented in *America's Purpose*?

First of all, to begin with the most obvious point (but one that was by no means obvious before January 16), the issue of whether the United States was once again ready and willing to use military force on a very large scale was unambiguously settled. This alone, of course, crushed the hopes and darkened what had seemed, to me and many other people, the bright prospects of the neoisolationists. Secondly, to the extent that this force was used by the U.S. in defense of its own economic interests, the Gulf War gave heart to the realists—although Harries (who originally supported Bush on realist grounds but who has retrospectively changed his mind) is correct when he writes in the current issue of the *National Interest* that it went beyond the realist prescription in its scale, in its resort to the United Nations, and in its appeal to the Wilsonian idea of a "new world order."

On the other hand, one has to say that this talk of a "new world order" was revealed in the aftermath of the war as nothing but a meatless bone thrown to the neo-Wilsonians. Far from trying to create a new political system in the Middle East, the Bush administration set its face even against any change of regime in Iraq. Indeed, the only change it favored was the replacement of Saddam Hussein by some other Baathist thug, and when this failed to happen, the U.S. entered into what can only be called complicity with Saddam Hussein in putting down the Kurds and the Shiites who had risen up against him at least partly in the tragically mistaken belief that they would be supported by the United States. The war, it turns out, was fought merely to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait and to "defang" him—not, in other words, to establish a new order in the Middle East (except on the West Bank!) but precisely to restore the old one and to make sure that it would remain secure from any further disruption by Iraq or any other ambitious local ruler.

In short, while the United States has inaugurated the post-cold-war era with a foreign policy which is both more interventionist than most realists, and all isolationists, would like, and is also cloaked in the kind of neo-Wilsonian rhetoric both of those groups deplore, our actions have nevertheless been much more closely in tune with the ideas of the realists than with the Wilsonian model.

Nor is the Gulf War the only example pointing to this conclusion. The same realist perspective that led to a preference for the alleged "stability" of the status quo in Iraq over a breakup of the country has also led to a preference—unenthusiastic and resigned but a preference all the same—for Mikhail Gorbachev over his opponents in the Baltics and within Russia itself. So too did it lead to a preference—perhaps even less enthusiastic—for the Communist rulers of China over their challengers in Tiananmen Square. Furthermore, in these two cases, where in contrast to Iraq we were actually presented with a *democratic* alternative to the powers-that-be, we in effect sided with the latter. What could be less Wilsonian and more realist than that?

I say this with no pleasure, since I myself sympathize with the Wilsonian perspective (which, incidentally, has found its most persuasive recent exposition in Joshua Muravchik's new book, *Exporting Democracy*). Believing as I also do that the American national interest can only be served properly and fully by a foreign policy that does indeed work, prudently but surely, toward the Wilsonian ideal of making the world safe for democracy, I think that the evident triumph of realism in the Gulf War bodes ill for the future. Already, for example, we see that instead of producing the stability it always pursues and promises, the realist perspective has left Iraq in a murderous turmoil. Nor is the Soviet Union under Gorbachev exactly a stable country.

Still, chastened by the failure of the contributors to *America's Purpose* to anticipate what was so soon to happen, I am prepared to make only two small predictions: that the realists will not be discredited by this sorry performance (any more than they were discredited by their even sorrier performance in the 70's, when they brought us the blessings of détente), and that the neoisolationists, battered though they were in the Gulf War, and the neo-Wilsonians, in spite of the great disappointments *they* suffered in its aftermath, will both pick themselves up, dust themselves off, and come back to fight another day.

Islamic Racism

RACE AND SLAVERY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. By BERNARD LEWIS. *Oxford University Press. 184 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID PRYCE-JONES

SEVERAL features combine to make Bernard Lewis an exceptionally distinguished historian of the Middle Eastern world. First of all, he writes a poised and indeed classical prose which is accessible to the general reader. Not too deep below the surface is that fully imagined sense of the human comedy with its ironies and paradoxes, without which history must remain a matter for specialists or cause-mongers. Secondly, familiar with all the major languages and literatures of the Middle East, he knows most of those of Europe too, his references extending into Russian, Polish, and Hungarian. Finally, his sympathies for Turks, Persians, Arabs, and Jews encourage him to tell the truth about them, the bad with the good. In this field, those who prefer reality to myth are few.

In *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961), Lewis depicted in rich detail the complex process whereby the pre-1914 Ottoman state became Turkey as it is today, without an empire, but the first Muslim country in the Middle East

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to have held a free election. Modernization, Lewis showed, might be compatible with the preservation of Turkish identity and much else that was valuable in its heritage. But the end results of this modernization would depend on the kind of accommodation that Turkish society could reach with the West.

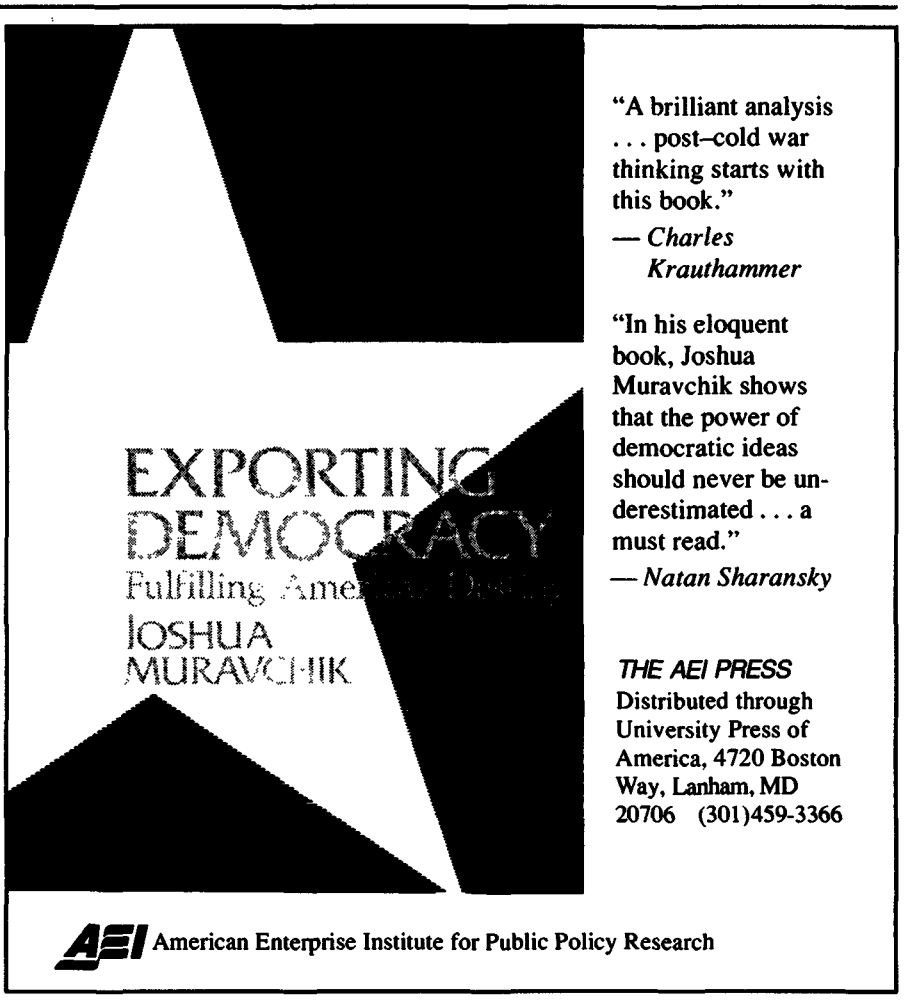
Two shorter books, *The Arabs in History* (1950) and *The Middle East and the West* (1963), brought into focus the comparable accommodations which faced the Arabs. In Muslim, and especially Arab, eyes, Westerners had traditionally been regarded with disdain, as inferior in religion and culture, offering nothing. All of a sudden, so it seemed, these same Westerners thrust into their midst with strange institutions and creativities which were a challenge to customary life, to Arab and Muslim lands, to historic identity itself. By the time Muslims took the measure of this unfolding drama, it was already too late for reforms which might have allowed them to meet the West on equal terms.

Lewis has the empathy to communicate what a shock the West delivered to the foundations of Islamic and Arab civilization. Thoughtful Muslims have analyzed the Western performance in order to establish whether it can be emulated, and if so, how. Others have sought to repudiate it altogether. To many, the departed glory of Islam has furnished a counter-illusion of a pre-Western Golden Age. Caught in a highly volatile welter of painful and contradictory emotions, many Middle Eastern Muslims appear to fluctuate between self-pity and nostalgia, envy, and resentment. Contrasting themselves to Westerners, Arabs and Iranians in particular display little confidence in their identity. Today it remains as unclear as ever what has to be done if the Muslim Middle East and the West are to meet on terms of parity. The difficulty of how to be modern and Arab or Iranian, as an individual or as a society, has yet to be resolved.

THE years after 1950, when Lewis was beginning to document these perceptions, were marked by the triumph of Arab nationalism. According to its advocates, that was a doctrine destined to restore the pride in identity which Arabs ought legitimately to feel. No sort of historical process had brought the West into the Arab midst, the nationalists declared, but simple greed. Western efforts to build modern political and social structures and institutions in the Arab world, and to develop resources including the oil fields which were the basis of unprecedented wealth, were to be seen as cunning deceptions to mask exploitation. Two abstract nouns, imperialism and colonialism, reduced everything Western to a personification of evil which had turned the Arabs into innocent victims in all respects. Nationalist leaders like Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and Algeria's Ahmed Ben Bella promised that the moment Arabs were free from imperialism and colonialism they would meet the West on equal terms. Innocence would reign, the pre-Western Golden Age would return again, this time in the form of democracy with guaranteed rights, and even Arab socialism.

Equal terms, to these leaders, meant no accommodation to the West in general, or to the Jews of Israel in particular. To the departing colonial powers, none of this seemed to make much difference. Handing over power to the nationalists without much resistance (except in Algeria), British and French ruling circles supposed that they would be popular everywhere for it. More importantly, they did not care a fig what would actually happen to Arab populations: if Arabs professed to be victims of the West, they might as well learn what victimization really looked like. In one country after another, Arab nationalist leaders were to cause oppression and death on a scale never experienced in the darkest chapters of colonialism.

From Nasser and Ben Bella down to Saddam Hussein, these men were concerned with what their countries could do for them and their careers, rather than what they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could do for their countries. On the one hand, they took from the West arms, aid, styles of social mobilization, the model of the police state. On the other hand, they rejected everything the West actually stood for. In either case, they had no concept of how to reconcile past and present, the religious with the secular, in order to discover how to be both Arab and modern.

Academics and experts in the West who were supposed to know best about the peoples of the Middle East might have been expected to come to the defense of these peoples by exposing the sinister and absolutist pretensions of those who had levered themselves into power by means of nationalism of this type. Instead, the experts presented Arab nationalism as a cause worthy of the support of decent-minded persons everywhere. This was a *trahison des clercs* comparable to that committed in the previous generation by Communist intellectuals and fellow-travelers.

Nobody could have predicted from the writings of Arnold Toynbee, Sir Hamilton Gibb, Jacques Berque, Elizabeth Monroe, Philip Hitti, Albert Hourani, and innumerable others that independence for the Arabs would prove a protracted nightmare of war and civil war, tyranny and massacre, corruption and waste of resources. Yet the pupils and heirs of those who justified Arab nationalism and sought to establish its myths now dominate universities throughout the English-speaking world, and they publish specialist works and field studies which continue to do Arabs the disservice of distorting reality beyond recognition. From this body of work or special pleading, Arabs appear to be people who are not to be trusted to hear the truth about the violence that their leaders do to them. Arab achievements must be inflated, and their mistakes or misjudgments blamed on others. Condescending in themselves, such apologetics also hold Arabs back from meeting the West on truly equal terms.

IN THE latter part of his career, Bernard Lewis has been publishing books and monographs which explode one aspect or another of nationalist-inspired myth-making. The necessary task of the historian, he writes in his latest book, is the correction of error, "even of emotionally satisfying and politically useful error." It is a lonely business, though, and requires courage and perseverance. Without scholarship and humanity like Lewis's, it might not have been possible. In fact, Lewis has had no trouble disposing of Arab nationalist critics, because he argues from texts while they exhibit emotions satisfactory to them, and politically useful too.

In common with everybody else, Muslims and Arabs never had a Golden Age; they prospered in certain periods and places, though not in others. Lewis's *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (1982) describes how the undoubted greatness of classical Islam also contained complacency as well as the failure of imagination which was to seal the unequal encounter to come. He quotes a valuable and fascinating range of chronicles, letters, diplomatic dispatches, and literary sources to reveal how Arabs, and later Ottomans and Persians, almost unanimously refused to acknowledge whatever did not fit their preconceptions.

Notions of democratic rights, or pluralism, or Arab socialism as a constituent of the Islamic heritage are anachronistic, invented by contemporary nationalists in pursuit of current political ends. If Arabs do not grant full rights even to Muslim minorities living among them, like the Kurds, then they are even less likely to do so for non-Muslims on their borders. In today's Middle East, Israel is in the position of a minority asking for equal rights under guarantee from Arabs who have no such privileges for themselves. Arabs—more exactly, elements of the PLO—like to assert that this is not the issue. Their Palestine will be a democratic and secular state, and those Israelis who are permitted to live within it will only have to revert to the benign former status of Jews under Islamic rule.

Two of Lewis's most succinct books, *The Jews of Islam* (1984) and *Semites and Anti-Semites* (1986), show this allegedly benign status to be another example of Golden Age mythologizing. Traditionally, relations between believers and nonbelievers were regulated according to Islamic law. Jews, like Christians, were "people of the book," and as such were spared the choice between conversion and death. Because they did not submit to the Muslim revelation, however, they could be accepted only as second-class citizens, the so-called *dhimmi*, with penalties in a number of spheres. That, in Muslim eyes, was the right ordering of the world.

Practices varied greatly, depending on period and place. Lewis distinguishes between discrimination, which he is resigned to calling "the normal hostility" one people feels for another, and persecution. In the Islamic world, there was nothing comparable to anti-Semitism in the vicious European mode. One of the ironies which Lewis brings out is that Jews themselves spread the myth that they enjoyed rights in Islam, not because they actually did, but as a reproach to the Christians who were increasingly persecuting them in Europe.

For Arabs, the existence of Israel now represents the disordering of the Muslim world, and Lewis provides much evidence of the depth of resentment that this has provoked. Following the Christian example, Arabs in recent years have been converting discrimination into outright anti-Semitism, with all that this implies for Israel. Lewis fears that it may exclude compromise between the peoples concerned. The absence of compromise means surrendering to myths of exclusivity and supremacy on the part of the Arabs, in which case there can be no modernization worth the name, and anxieties about identity will increase. It may not be too much to say that accommodation with Israel has become the immediate test determining how to be Arab and modern.

THE myth of total racial harmony in Islam is on a par with the myth of *dhimmi* happiness, and likewise aimed at casting a false nostalgic glow to attract those who today rightly abhor racism. *Race and*

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Slavery in the Middle East, as its title indicates, covers this ground. As everywhere else in the ancient world, slavery existed in pre-Islamic Arabia. The Prophet himself owned slaves. When the Qu'ran laid down the law regulating the obviously unequal relationship between master and slave, no racial or color prejudice was involved. Slaves were either prisoners of war, or offspring of slave parents. Women became household slaves or concubines, the men usually laborers. Muslims, of course, could not be legally enslaved.

Following the Arab campaigns of conquest, new categories arose of non-Arab Muslims and the children of Arab fathers and non-Arab mothers. Many of these were black. In the early centuries of Islam, a pattern developed of prejudice and racial hostility toward these people and their descendants. Some slaves were of European origin, mostly Slav, but the majority were African. Stereotypes emerged, as they did in other societies, more often than not in very similar language and imagery. Lewis quotes many of them, as well as clear and moving refutations and protests against such intolerance on the part of black Muslims as well as white. Anti-defamation literature would not exist, he points out, unless there had been a strong reason for it.

By whichever route, the journey into slavery was horrific, but Lewis thinks that slaves taken into Muslim countries may have received better treatment than elsewhere, and could more readily advance to positions of influence and power. This was particularly so in the special cases of military slaves and eunuchs, who might be either white or black. Muslim piety, moreover, outweighed considerations of color. In due course the supply of white slaves dried up. Profits from trading were so high that Muslim traders lost their scruples and sold fellow-Muslims within their reach in Africa—Christians in the trade were similarly disregarding religious prohibitions. The diehard argument was that since slavery was not forbidden by Islam, it was lawful, and what was lawful was beyond amending. The elimination of slavery from Mus-

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Secretary Baker's Peace Mission

Are he and the President putting pressure in the right places?

In the wake of the Gulf War, which many now believe we ended too early, Saddam Hussein and his army have inflicted the most horrible genocidal slaughter on the defenseless Kurds. But the President and Secretary Baker initially paid only cursory attention to this disaster, even though it is partly of our own doing. They are mostly fixated on the so-called "Israel-Palestinian conflict" and they are bringing renewed pressure on Israel to yield "land for peace".

What are the facts?

■ The Secretary may be handicapped by the fact that, until his recent visits, he had no real knowledge, no "feel" for the country and its unique problems. That is the more regrettable since Israel is certainly the closest (and perhaps only reliable) ally the United States has in the entire region. If he had deeper knowledge, he would realize that in the absence of any reliable and enduring peace with the Arab countries, Israel could not give up any of its strategic heartland, the so-called "West Bank". From the heights of the Judean hills, which he would have Israel yield to the Arabs, one can literally overlook Zion Square in Jerusalem, Ben Gurion Airport, and most of Israel's population centers, industrial plant, and military installations. One shivers at the thought of what would have happened to Israel if Saddam Hussein, instead of having launched his relatively innocuous Scud missiles from 450 miles away, could have positioned his armor, his planes and his missiles in the "West Bank" or on those Judean mountain ridges.

■ There are those who claim that, in these days of airplanes and missiles, territorial depth is of no military significance and that Israel should therefore not hesitate to relinquish the "West Bank" and Gaza in order to attain peace. But that is fallacious reasoning. Israel, according to the assessment of every knowledgeable military person, would be naked and indefensible if it were to yield those territories. If Israel did not control those territories it would, in case of surprise attack, be cut in half at its narrow waist before it had time to mobilize. Why the President and Secretary Baker continue to press this suicidal course on its most reliable ally in the area is a mystery. Is it because they don't really understand the murderous intentions of the Arabs toward Israel? The goal of the Arabs is not the establishment of a "Palestinian State" on the "West Bank". No, the real goal of the Arabs, embedded in the Charter of the PLO and never repudiated, is the total annihilation of the state of Israel. The presence of the "infidel Jews" in their midst is an unacceptable affront to the Arabs. The Palestinian state is a sideshow. Its purpose is to serve as a launching pad for the last "jihad" — finally to chase the Jews into the sea "where they belong".

■ And there are those who say that Israel doesn't really need any strategic depth. All that is needed would be guarantees by the United Nations and a mutual security treaty, which the United States would probably grant if Israel were to yield to pressure and would give up the "West Bank". The United States is undoubtedly the best friend and the greatest benefactor that Israel has. But Israel simply can't afford to entrust its security to a third party. Even with the best of intentions, the United States is far away. It took our country several months, and under ideal conditions, to build up a force to fight and defeat Saddam Hussein. If Israel were attacked — not just by Iraq, but by probably five or six other Arab countries, no help could possibly arrive in time if the enemy were poised, not beyond the Jordan, but on the outskirts of Jerusalem and within a few miles of Tel Aviv.

Our country has saved both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia from total destruction and from becoming provinces of Iraq . It is therefore disappointing that the President and the Secretary of State decided to lean, not on the Arabs but on Israel in order to bring about peace in the Middle East. One could have hoped for some gratitude at least from those two countries. Secretary Baker, as a first step in his peace mission, could have asked the Arabs to terminate their state of belligerency against Israel, to end their commercial boycott against Israel that has been in effect for over 40 years (long before Israel came into the administration of the disputed territories), and to renounce the slanderous equation that "Zionism is racism". But there is no leaning on the Arabs who, just barely having escaped their annihilation, are now as insolent and as arrogant as before. By leaning on Israel and by the constant repetition of the shopworn mantra of "land for peace", the President and the Secretary of State are endangering the only democracy in that wide area of the world and are instead giving comfort to the tyrannical Arab regimes, who are no friends of ours. The pressure is being put in the wrong place and it is applied in the wrong direction.

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lim countries was one aspect of accommodation to Western demands and values. By way of conclusion, Lewis offers another irony: the myth of total racial harmony in the Islamic world was put about in the last century by Christians, as a reproach to the practices of white men in the Americas and in Southern Africa.

A Westerner can only describe the difficulties of reconciling the inherited Islamic identity with the world at large, so very differently shaped by the West. To judge from Lewis, there are no prescriptions. But historians are not in the business of providing hope; authoritative addresses to reality like his will serve excellently instead, and they make him a matchless guide to the background of Middle East conflict today.

People Renewal

NEW PEOPLE IN OLD NEIGHBORHOODS. By LOUIS WINNICK. *Russell Sage Foundation. 287 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by SCOTT MCCONNELL

AFTER the defeat of Edward I. Koch, New York no longer has a mayor who regularly asks the populace, "How'm I doing?" But the city's residents do a great deal of temperature-taking of their own. Those with homes in the city, or careers tied to New York businesses, worry whether they will be forced to give up and leave. As City Hall flirts with fiscal insolvency, the city's major private-sector employers—primarily Wall Street brokerage houses—shift their back-office operations out of state, insinuating ever so gently that it is easier to find clerical workers who are numerate and literate in places like Tampa, Florida.

Beyond the fiscal crisis are a number of "structural" problems—bridges that are old and ill-repaired, prisons filled beyond capacity. And there is crime: in the last week of February more Americans were killed on the streets of New York than in the ground war against Iraq. And, as in the rest of urban America, there is a substantial underclass permanently on welfare and tempted by every vice, people whom the city cannot afford to sustain, much less uplift.

Needless to say, virtually all of these issues have a racial cast. Most of the underclass is black or Puerto Rican; most taxpayers and public worriers are white. And in racial terms the trends are clear: the city's white population, aging and comparatively infertile, has been declining steadily since the 1960's. In the 1990 census, widely thought to undercount minorities, the number of whites came up to little more than 43 percent of the population—a drop of 10 percent since the previous census.

But this is not the whole story, either. Of possibly greater and certainly more hopeful consequence to New York is the substantial immigration in recent years of Asians and non-Puerto Rican Hispanics. These immigrants have been on the periphery of the city's consciousness since at least a decade ago when they began to establish themselves in such highly visible jobs as greengrocers, cab drivers, and newsstand managers. Now that a sense of siege has descended on the city—dating roughly from the onset of the crack epidemic—conversations about them have assumed a new tone. The newcomers, it is hoped and believed, are going to save New York. It is they who will revive the dying neighborhoods, win the top academic prizes, restore social discipline to a dissolute environment. While some New Yorkers may resent the new immigrants, the more general view, particularly among the city's elites, is that they constitute a foreign army of liberation.

Louis Winnick would probably not use such a stark formula in describing the effects of the new immigration on the city, but the thought is very much present in his tightly focused study, *New People in Old Neighborhoods*. Winnick, formerly an executive officer with the Ford Foundation, is a well-known proponent of the optimistic view that the city's demographic trends point toward a genuine multiracial cosmopolitanism that will spare New York the more pronounced black-white splits of other American cities.

WINNICK makes clear his enthusiasm for the new immigrants in his opening chapter, where he asserts that much of urban America's decline during the 1950's and 1960's can be traced to the restrictive immigration laws enacted as long ago as the 1920's. By contrast, the more expansive bill of 1965 opened the United States to large streams of Asian and Caribbean-basin immigrants who, he claims, have brought about a moral replenishment of our cities. In Winnick's judgment, what we need in America is not so much urban renewal as "people" renewal, and this we have gotten through an infusion of individuals committed to strong family values and a work ethic so intense that it "shrinks the hallowed Protestant ethic to apathy."

These rather sharp assertions appear early in the book's introductory chapters. Instead of amplifying his arguments in the main text, Winnick tries to illustrate them by means of a historical and demographic study of a single neighborhood, Sunset Park.

A working-class area on the southeast edge of Brooklyn, Sunset Park has a history as a home to immigrants—the first stop in America for Poles and Irish, Finns and Norwegians and Italians. In the old days it was a community built around its churches and the Brooklyn docks, which provided employment. The neighborhood experienced its first shock of contraction during the Depression, but then rebounded with the war and its aftermath. By the 1950's, however, decline had once again set in, as the children and grandchildren of the European founders moved elsewhere. They were replaced by Puerto Ricans, but the industries which could best provide work for these new settlers were themselves in full decline. By the mid-1960's, Sunset Park was largely impoverished; it was badly looted during the 1977 blackout, and seemed terminally moribund.

But then about 1980 an unantic-

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ipated rebound began with an infusion of "new people." Some of these were yuppies who could not afford the higher prices of nearby Park Slope or Manhattan, but most were Asians and Hispanics from Mexico and the Dominican Republic. Over the following seven years crime fell, housing prices rose, much renovation was accomplished, new stores opened.

Winnick extrapolates, probably correctly, from Sunset Park to the city as a whole: the immigrant surge since the 1970's has indeed had a reviving effect on New York, and this is a story which can be told one neighborhood at a time. Yet as a social historian Winnick largely limits himself to matters which can be quantified—real-estate prices, the evolution of names in the telephone directory, the condition of housing stock. *New People in Old Neighborhoods* is thus, in a way, contemporary history with the politics and the culture left out, and that can be a lot to leave out.

Winnick notes, for instance, that at community-board meetings in today's Sunset Park, the concerns are the same as they have always been—the quality of the schools, street repair, crime. There is no major, festering conflict between the aging, property-owning white ethnics and the newcomers, or any deep tension between either group and long-time welfare recipients. But one wonders whether this reassuringly orderly and highly functional mix of people in fact represents the future of multiethnic New York.

Shortly before the publication of *New People in Old Neighborhoods* a highly explosive interethnic conflict broke out in Flatbush, one of the communities adjoining Sunset Park. The conflict, which involved Korean shopowners and various groups of picketing black radicals, was a variant of battles that had taken place elsewhere in Brooklyn, and in Harlem, throughout the 1980's. But the difference in this case was that there were immigrants on both sides. The woman who claimed to have been assaulted by a Korean storeowner was Haitian, and radical Haitian activists played at least a secondary role in organizing the picketing against two of the targeted Korean stores. New York's homegrown black activists used this and other episodes in their efforts to draw the Haitians and other Caribbean immigrants into their political networks, hoping, not entirely in vain, to ensure their radicalization.

Such episodes suggest that it would be unwise to conclude that *all* recent immigrants are Winnick's sort of hard-working, pious, family-oriented people, with aspirations to join the bourgeois American mainstream. Clearly some of them—as was true of immigrants eighty years ago—have different plans altogether. And whatever the particular cultural baggage new immigrants may bring with them, they are all prey to a variety of new influences and temptations which did not exist during America's previous waves of immigration. There is now, for example, the always welcoming welfare system; there is a school system which often sets out to undermine the patriotism and sense of common allegiance most new immigrants share with other Americans; and there are the previously mentioned efforts of domestic activists to integrate new immigrants into the culture of opposition.

What do the immigrant parents of children now streaming into the public schools think about the city proposal to hand out condoms in the classroom? Are they offended, inspired, bemused by, or indifferent to the more egregious manifestations of "gay pride" that make their way by television from Manhattan to the living rooms of Sunset Park? Has New York's local recession discouraged the more skilled and dynamic from settling in the city altogether?

In short, a great deal remains to be written about the new immigrants and their effect upon America. Still, *New People in Old Neighborhoods* tells an important part of the story—and its well-argued optimism is refreshing at this difficult moment in New York's history.

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The Novelist's Trade

A WRITER'S REALITY. By MARIO VARGAS LLOSA. Edited, with an introduction, by MYRON I. LICHTBLAU. *Syracuse University Press. 184 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by MARK FALCOFF

FOR the last 25 years, the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa has been known to connoisseurs of fiction as one of the greatest living novelists (*The Time of the Hero, The Green House, Conversations in the Cathedral*). And over the last ten years he has emerged as one of the leading "public intellectuals" of Latin America, challenging the asphyxiating statism which, he holds, is largely responsible for the backwardness of that continent—a point of view set forth in a series of essays published in Spanish under the title *Contra viento y marea* ("Against Wind and Tide"). Two years ago he moved from polemics to politics proper, running for the presidency of his unhappy country. Defeated by an unscrupulous opportunist (whose just punishment is now to govern that hopeless land), Vargas Llosa has been released to return to the republic of letters. We—if not the Peruvians—are much the richer for it.

If evidence were needed, we have here his latest volume, *A Writer's Reality*, which brings together a series of lectures Vargas Llosa delivered in 1988 at Syracuse University. These talks—which are really spoken essays—deal with the task of being a writer, and at the same time they constitute something of an intellectual and artistic autobiography. Chapter by chapter, Vargas Llosa moves us through his entire *ouevre*, and explains the particular issues and problems he has chosen to address in each of his novels. He also reveals some of the tricks of the novelist's trade. In fact, I know of no work, not even Henry James's *The Art of Fiction*, which so lucidly explains what a novelist does and how he does it. Better still, one need not have read any of Vargas Llosa's books to follow his argument, though after reading these witty and stimulating commentaries few will be able to resist the temptation.

Vargas Llosa is what used to be called a liberal intellectual—he evokes the period, almost lost to us now, when literature and its problems were the proper concern of every educated person, and when literary criticism was meant for potential or real *consumers* of literature, not—as today—merely for other critics. He also seeks to break down the artificial barrier between popular and high culture (though not in the way that this is being done today in American and some European universities). His argument is that fiction is a deep human necessity, and we will find it where we can—if not in novels, then in soap operas, gossip, legends, or what have you. In the case of Latin America, "one of our worst defects, our best fictions, is to believe that our miseries have been imposed on us from abroad, that others . . . have always been responsible for our problems."

In these lectures, Vargas Llosa reveals himself also as a cultural commentator of no mean importance, and coming from a country on the margins of Western civilization, he unashamedly confirms the centrality and value of that civilization. On the subject of the Spanish conquest of Peru, he throws down the gauntlet to "multiculturalists" past and present:

> . . . something new and exotic had germinated in the history of man. In [Spanish] culture, although injustice and abuse often favored by religion had proliferated, . . . a social space of human activities had evolved that was neither legislated nor controlled by those in power . . . this new society would give way to the creation of the individual as the sovereign source of values by which society would be judged.
>
> Those who, rightly so, are shocked by the abuses and crimes of the conquest, must bear in mind that the first men to condemn them and ask that they be brought to an end were men . . . who came to America with the *conquistadores* and abandoned the ranks in order to collaborate with the vanquished. . . .
>
> They fought against their fellow men and against the policies of their own country in the name of moral principle that to them was higher than any principle of nation or state. This self-determination could not have been possible among the Inca or any of the other pre-Hispanic cultures. . . .
>
> The first culture to interrogate and question itself, the first to break up the masses into individual beings who with time gradually gained the right to think and act for themselves, was to become, thanks to that unknown exercise, freedom, the most powerful civilization in our world.

This is only one of the startling *aperçus* which Vargas Llosa manages to pack into fewer than 200 pages. Those pages also include, in addition to the spirited commentary on his own work, a discussion of the division between Latin American intellectual elites and the ordinary people; reflections on the peculiar prejudices of foreign visitors to Latin America; thoughts on the problem of the "committed" writer—a vindication of Jorge Luis Borges; and a defense of literary cosmopolitanism. In all, *A Writer's Reality* is one of the most important, readable, and entertaining books to appear in years. Let us hope that Vargas Llosa will take time out frequently from the act of creation to give us more like it.

MARK FALCOFF *is resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He has translated essays by many leading Latin American writers, including Mario Vargas Llosa.*

Up From Narcissism

THE TRUE AND ONLY HEAVEN: PROGRESS AND ITS CRITICS. By CHRISTOPHER LASCH. *Norton. 591 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by MARY EBERSTADT

WHEN Christopher Lasch observes, as he did recently in the New York *Times*, that "the labels that are commonly used to describe political positions are no longer valid," he is at least speaking from experience. A historian, prolific author, and leading social critic, Lasch is also a writer whose

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own evolution has taken him ever further from the political taxonomy to which most readers are accustomed.

That journey has been the more interesting because it began so unremarkably. In books like *The Agony of the American Left* (1965) and *The New Radicalism* (1966), for example, Lasch appeared typical of the Left of those years and orthodox in his preoccupations and views. He believed then that the American government was "a war machine"; that the anti-Communist intellectuals of his day were "the servants of the secret police"; that "socialism [was] the only hope"; and so on.

Nevertheless, before the 1960's were over, as he recounts now in the introduction to his latest book, Lasch had come to believe that radicalism itself had run amok. It was not merely that the New Left had degenerated into what he now calls "revolutionary histrionics," or that its spokesmen had become "clownish media freaks." What was more important, his own studies of the American family, combined with his personal experience as a husband and father, had led Lasch to very different conclusions about the "revolutions" of the 1960's from those reached by most of his political allies.

By the mid-1970's, for example, he had come to "question the Left's program of sexual liberation, careers for women, and professional child care." That questioning encompassed a great deal more by 1978, when Lasch published his best-known book, *The Culture of Narcissism*. There, he argued that the pursuit of individualism and spurious forms of "liberation" had left American men and women "restless," "perpetually unsatisfied," and "preoccupied with the self."

Though *The Culture of Narcissism* was intended as a general indictment of society, there was no mistaking that its arguments took particular aim at the Left. To many for whom "liberation" had become a rallying cry—and particularly to feminists—Lasch had now placed himself beyond the pale. (One reader who did not feel that way was President Carter, who invoked the book favorably in his disastrous speech on American "malaise.") To this day, Lasch remains more unyielding on moral issues than almost any other critic of the Left (or even the Right); in a recent issue of *Harper's*, for instance, he wondered whether divorce should not be forbidden to couples with children under the age of twenty-one. With other such heresies behind him—about crime, pornography, drugs, and most recently, even the cold war—Lasch's break with what might be called the "liberationist" elements of the Left would appear complete.

Even so, and as *The True and Only Heaven* makes abundantly clear, the fact that its author became a problem to the Left has not made him a friend or an asset to the Right. He remains an opponent of capitalism, or what he sometimes calls "consumerism"; and "consumerism," he believes, "is a more serious threat to 'traditional values' than the allegedly anti-capitalist ideology of the New Class." The New Right, he thinks, was doomed by exactly this tension between traditionalism and capitalism. So too was Ronald Reagan, whose "rhetorical defense of family and neighborhood could not be reconciled with his championship of unregulated business enterprise." Lasch has least use of all for neoconservatives, who have "obscured the difference," as he puts it, "between opposition to 'middle-class values' and opposition to business." Today as yesterday, in sum, Lasch takes a dim view of conservatism as Americans know it.

Such are the paradoxes, or at least the ideological curiosities, of Christopher Lasch. An invitation to weigh these paradoxes has now appeared in the form of *The True and Only Heaven*, which is, among many other possible descriptions, a 600-page compendium of the dissonant ideas that have come to occupy its author.

Though the book's subtitle seems to promise a genealogy of ideas, that promise is somewhat misleading. A curious, almost overwhelmingly ambitious, work whose focus shifts restlessly, often from one page to another, *The True and Only Heaven* does not so much pursue a thesis as meditate on several theses at once, usually with the aid of several hundreds of figures drawn from American intellectual history.

It all begins rather conventionally. The "old political ideologies," Lasch reiterates here, "have exhausted their capacity either to explain events or to inspire men and women to constructive action." Both Left and Right, he is convinced, "share a baffled sense of drift." Both sides, as a result, are incapable of addressing "the overriding issue of our times"—the issue of "limits."

Our "riotous standard of living," Lasch writes, is already on borrowed time; "the earth's finite resources will not support an indefinite expansion of industrial civilization." Wealth, too, is limited. In the United States, "a growing proletariat faces a grim future," while "immigrants strain existing resources to the breaking point." The world outside is rife with other problems, including "overpopulation," a widening gap between rich nations and poor, and "more and more violent movements of insurrection and terrorism against the West." In all, Lasch contends, these "darkening prospects" make a mockery of the faith in material progress—a faith, as he demonstrates, that extends to all factions of contemporary politics.

But if progress is an illusion, how are we to cope? Part of Lasch's answer lies in resurrecting the thoughts of those, mostly Americans, who have not shared the progressive faith in its various versions. The 19th-century populists who decried industrialization and saw wages as a form of "slavery" receive particularly lengthy treatment. Among other interesting entries, Lasch also submits the German sociological tradition beginning with Ferdinand Tönnies and running through Durkheim, Weber, and Freud, among others. But by far the "most fruitful" source of opposition to the idea of

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progress, he finds, is "the tradition of Christian prophecy" transmitted through Calvinism and through "moral philosophers and social critics . . . in whom Calvinism remained a powerful background presence." Here Lasch ranges over religious figures like the Great Awakening's Jonathan Edwards to such modern Christians as Reinhold Niebuhr and Martin Luther King, Jr. Then there are the more secular critics: Thomas Carlyle, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James, Georges Sorel, G.D.H. Cole, Thorstein Veblen, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Josiah Royce, among many others.

A second source of moral guidance for Lasch is located in what he calls "the petty bourgeoisie": those "small proprietors, artisans, tradesmen, and farmers" who have traditionally acted to frustrate progressive designs. These are the people who know that "the true and only heaven," in a phrase borrowed from Hawthorne, is not to be confused with this world. What the lower-middle class has to offer, Lasch asserts, are the virtues we now need most: "its moral realism, its understanding that everything has its price, its respect for limits, its skepticism about progress." He writes feelingly about the men and women so often on the losing side of the battle over "progress" in recent decades: the irate parents of bused schoolchildren; the (largely lower-class) opponents of abortion and defenders of the traditional family; the families truly victimized by crime, drugs, and other forms of social breakdown. (On the other hand, of Lasch's own views about judicial power, abortion, and other "social issues" we are left uncertain, at least on the evidence of this book alone.)

About two-thirds of the way through, *The True and Only Heaven* metamorphoses rather suddenly into yet another kind of book, this one a devastating account of the contempt in which progressive thinkers have historically held the lower classes. The list of those indicted is a long one, beginning with Marcel Duchamp, Emma Goldman, and other would-be instigators of the "common assault on bourgeois morality," and continuing into the present day. Particularly villainous to Lasch are H.L. Mencken (who taught the educated "to think of themselves as a civilized minority in a nation of Babbitts, Rotarians, and rednecks"); the Kennedys and the myth of Camelot; and, what is perhaps most interesting, such major social scientists as Richard Hofstadter, Robert and Helen Lynd (authors of *Middletown*), Gunnar Myrdal, and Theodor Adorno.

In short, *The True and Only Heaven* is not a book likely to reassure those who found *The Culture of Narcissism* a retrograde piece of work. And thus far, the book has been earning distinctly cool, if respectful, reviews. What has not been pointed out, however, is a most peculiar irony that pervades this learned, disorganized, deeply felt, and ultimately exasperating work. It is an irony that arises because the author, for all his dislike of conventional labels and ideologies, is himself very much a captive of the selfsame categories he would have us reject.

That much is clear from the biases implicit in his themes. The crucial discussion of "limits" offers some particularly telling examples. "Overpopulation" is asserted as a problem but never even defined, much less demonstrated; our standard of living is said to be declining, but just how is left unclear; world events are said to be against us (largely through our own fault), but events that may have benefited us—the collapse of the Soviet empire comes to mind—are left unexamined; the discussion of the "ecological" threats we face relies without comment on the testimony of a member of the German Greens (!); and so on.

Yet if the authority of the Left is somehow supposed to suffice for the reader, the authority—or even good faith—of the Right appears next to nonexistent. Indeed, in a book as promiscuous with references as this one, the failure to consort in any way with the Right-of-Center perspectives that have entered the mainstream of debate seems rather a feat. The gap is all the more glaring because the arguments to which Lasch is attached are so often reminiscent of writers who go unnamed in his pages. At times, for example, as in his attack on the progressive intelligentsia, one is reminded of Paul Johnson; his lament for contemporary culture cannot but recall Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*; his views of foreign policy do not seem much different from, say, those of the post-cold-war Robert Nisbet. And there are many, many issues—feminism, the family, the Democratic party, the "cultural class war," and the decline of liberalism itself—on which Lasch seems to agree with arguments that neoconservatives have been making for decades.

The moral, if there is one, would seem to be that in Lasch's case the flight from ideology is an illusory one. A true iconoclast would not divide his prejudices so predictably, one suspects. It is true that many sophisticates share those prejudices, but Christopher Lasch knows something that most of them do not. He knows, for example, who the underdogs are when federal judges decide to "uplift" a school system. He knows that "progressive men and women" are by now "dangerously out of touch not just with 'Middle America' but with common sense"; that those same progressives have come to "fear America"; and that they would happily bend their fellow citizens to whatever the current demands of "progress" are said to be.

To see the coercion in a school-busing order, yet to deny the naked ambition behind "redistributing" the property of others; to deplore enlightened condescension toward mass mores and appetites, yet to reduce "consumer culture" to pornography, malls, and superhighways; to uphold the dignity of working men and women, yet to hope actively for the demise of the economic system that was, and is, their chief source of mobility as well as their preference—surely these incongruities are themselves manifestations of just that "baffled sense of drift" which *The True and Only Heaven* ascribes indiscriminately to Left and Right.

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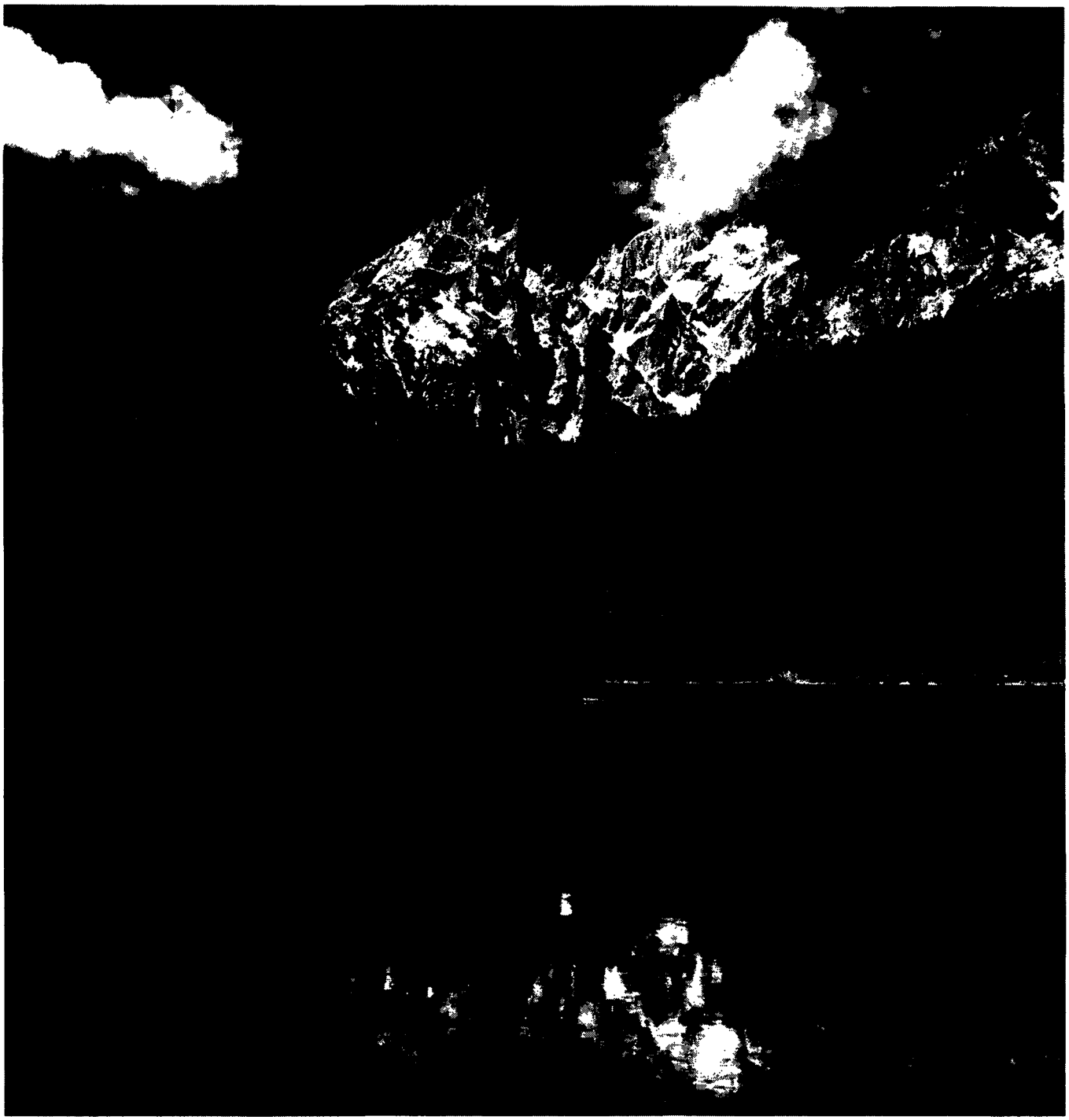

To confirm the benefits of nuclear energy, we got an outside opinion.

In the words of the President's National Energy Strategy, "Nuclear power is a proven electricity-generating technology that emits no sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, or greenhouse gases."

In fact, nuclear energy helps *reduce* airborne pollutants in the U.S. by over 19,000 tons every day. That's because the 111 nuclear plants now operating in this country don't burn anything to generate electricity.

The air we breathe is cleaner because of nuclear energy. But we need more nuclear plants. Because the more plants we have, the more energy we'll have for the future of our planet.

For more information, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66080, Dept. BE17, Washington, D.C. 20035.

Nuclear energy means cleaner air.

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